

Polyhedron[®]

NEWSLET

FEBRUARY

92



Conventions

Plattecon Eta, March 4-6

Platteville, WI

This convention will be held at the Platteville Student Center at the University of Wisconsin. Events include tournaments, raffles, contests, and game demos, plus special guests and events to be announced. Registration for the weekend is \$6 in advance or \$9 at the door; one-day registration is \$5 in advance, \$6 for at the door, and \$1 for spectator passes. For more information or for registration, contact the Platteville Gaming Association, Student Center, 1 University Plaza, Platteville, WI 53818.

Concentric, March 11-13

Chicago, Illinois

Come to the center of the universe!

Concentric Circle presents the new midwest gaming convention in Chicago, Illinois. We offer 15 all new RPGA® Network events, including Living City and four events premiering new products from FASA, West End Games, TSR, and White Wolf. We also have many miniature wargame events, including three Battletech tournaments, Fistful of Miniatures, WWII and Napoleonic naval battles, Fletcher Pratt, and land battles as well. Plus board games, additional role playing events, and the Puffing Billy railroad game tournament. We offer an art show and auction, the Games Plus games auction, dealers' room, banquet, and a blood drive tied in with our Vampire event. Our artist guest of honor is Robin Wood, our author guest of honor Lynn Abbey, and our gaming guests of honor Frank and Penny Mentzer. Concentric will be held at the Ramada Hotel O'Hare. Preregistration is \$12 until February 1; registration at the door is \$15. Write for information to: Concentric, 114 Euclid, P.O. Box 287, Park Ridge, IL 60068.

Owlcon XV, March 11-13

Houston, TX

The annual role playing and wargaming convention of WARP, the Wargaming and Role Playing Club of Rice University, will be held on the university campus in Houston, Texas. Tournaments will include the AD&D® game, Vampire, Werewolf, Bureau 13, paranoia, Star Wars, GURPS RuneQuest, and many more game systems. Other events include live action Call of Cthulhu, anime, and open gaming. Admission is \$15 at the door for a three-day pass, \$10 for Saturday only, or \$5 for Friday or Sunday only. Registration will be in the lobby of Sewell Hall beginning at 5:30 p.m., March 11. Preregistration received by March 1 is \$12 for the weekend. Write to: WARP, Owlcon XV, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, TX 77251-1892.

Little Wars, March 31-April 2

Rosemont, IL

This miniatures-oriented gaming weekend, sponsored by the Historical Miniatures Gaming Society (HMGS) Midwest, will be held at the Ramada Hotel O'Hare. Admission is \$8/day or \$12/weekend, and there are event fees. HMGS members and judges receive a discount on admission. In conjunction with Little Wars will be the second Spring Fantasy Revel, featuring several AD&D game tournaments and other role playing games. Fees are the same as for Little Wars, but for an additional \$3 over the one convention fee, gamers may attend both events. Discounted lodging on-site is also available. For more information, write: Jeffrey Hammerlund, 107 West Chicago St., Algonquin, IL 60102.

Clare-Voyance, April 8-10

Claremont, CA

Held on the campuses of the Claremont Colleges (about 30 minutes east of Los Angeles). Events include the AD&D game, Shadowrun, Robo Tech, Champions, Dangerous Journeys, an art display, and more. GMs welcome. Registration \$5, with a \$2 fee per game. Write to Games Central, Storyhouse, Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA 91711. Call (909) 624-3413 or (909) 624-3664.

Americon, April 16-17

Clayton/Franklinville, NJ

A weekend of fun and excitement will be held at the Clayton American Legion Hall on the Clayton/Franklinville border. Events include the AD&D 2nd Edition game, Werewolf, Mummy, Mage, Kult, the RAVENLOFT® setting, Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun, Battletech, AD&D Trivia, and more. Special game sessions include an AD&D 2nd Edition game benefit tournament for the Children's Hospital in Philadelphia, an RPGA Network RAVENLOFT game, and arena combat battles all weekend long. Other events include an art show, a miniature painting contest, an auction, open gaming, and trial runs of new RPGs. Preregistration from January 1 to March 15 is \$11 per day. Most game fees will be \$2 per game, except the \$5 benefit event. Registration at the door is \$12 per day. RPGA Network members receive a \$1 refund with proof of membership. For more information, call Carl "Thunder" at (609) 589-0556, or write Americon, c/o Carl "Thunder," P.O. Box 125, Mullica Hill, NJ 08012.

Andromeda One, April 22-24

Lincoln, NE

This convention will be held at the Ramada Inn at 141 N. 9th Street, and convention activities include RPGs, dealers' room,

24-hour video room, art show, and panel discussions. Guest of Honor: Katherine Kurtz. For more information, write to Duane Bouchard, 2848 S. 17, Lincoln, NE 68502, Compuserve 71762,1564.

Pointcon XVII, April 22-24

Westpoint, NY

This historical, science fiction, and role playing convention will be held at the United States Military Academy in West Point. Events include the AD&D game, Battletech, Shadowrun, Micro-Armor, Warhammer Fantasy 40K, Johnny Reb, and many more role playing strategy, and board games. RPGA Network sponsored events will be highlighted during the convention. Other events include a dealer's room, computer gaming, miniature painting contest, and open gaming. Registration is \$12 at the door and \$10 if preregistered by mail. There are no event fees. Write to USMA Wargames Committee; ATTN: POINTCON XVII, P.O. Box 2666, West Point, NY 10997.

Wyvercon '94, June 17-19

Mount Vernon, WA

This convention will be held at the Skagit County Fair Grounds. Featured events include an RPGA Network AD&D game tournament, a LaserTag arena, and a Saturday night dance. Other events include Battletech, Boffer Chess, a Lost Souls game, 24-hour open gaming, martial arts demos, a miniatures contest, costume contest, dealers', on-site food vendors, and more. On-site camping and RV spaces are available. Preregistration through May 31, 1994 is \$15 for the weekend. On-site registration is \$20 for the weekend. Send registration fees or inquiries to: Skagit Valley Gamers Association/Wyvercon '94, P.O. Box 2325, Mount Vernon, WA 98273, or call: (206) 855-0197 and ask for Todd or Larianne.

QuinCon IX, July 15-17

Quincy, IL

A fantastic mix of role playing, miniature games, and boardgames featuring RPGA tournaments, special guests, and a Saturday auction. Nearly 70 events, featuring both new games and classic favorites. No game fees. For more information, send a SASE to QUINCON IX, c/o Mark Hoskins, 1181 Pratt Street, Barry, IL 62312. Admission fees are \$5 for one day or \$12 for the weekend.



About the Cover

A surprised Zakharian woman discovers the powers of a *weapon of prowess* (detailed in this issue), much to the dismay of the others in the market. James Holloway illustrated this month's Arabesque cover.

Publisher
Rick Behling

Editor
Jean Rabe

Associate Editor
Dave Gross

Graphic Director
Larry Smith

Production Staff
Paul Hanchette
Tracey Isler
Kevin Melka

Subscriptions
Charmaine Snyder

If your mailing label reads
"Exp 2.94"
this is your last issue.
Renew today!

©1994 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Polyhedron[®]

NEWSZINE

Volume 14, Number 2
Issue #92, February, 1994

SPECIAL FEATURE

12 River Rats — by Keith Polster

An assignment for the Greyhawk Adventurers Guild leads to treacherous waters and more treacherous thieves in this **WORLD OF GREYHAWK[®]** setting scenario from the popular Rats series of Network tournaments.

FEATURES

5 The Living City — by James Buchanan

It's the first thing any adventurer demands upon arriving at an inn, but who brews all that beer?

10 The Door Islands — by Kerry D. Jordan

The winner of our **GAMMA WORLD[™]** territorial map contest.

20 Arabian Wonders — Gregory W. Detwiler

A trove of fabulous magical treasures from the Land of Fate, Zakhara!

25 Jenette LeFleur — by Rick Mangekian

One of the Living City's most beautiful women is not at all what she appears.

31 Living City Character Sheets — by Harold Johnson

The Network's new and improved record sheets customize your character. Here's the first in a series of class-specific forms.

EDITORIAL

4 Notes From HQ — by Jean Rabe

SoonerCon gamers build bridges over the generation gap.

DEPARTMENTS

18 The Everwinking Eye — by Ed Greenwood

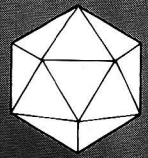
The penultimate installment of Elminster's treasure-tour of the Vast.

24 Into The Dark — by James Lowder

More mayhem from murderous mannequins on home video.

27 The Living Galaxy — by Roger Moore

From word association to adventure-building . . . how to invigorate your imagination with a deceptively simple exercise in designing gaming scenarios.



Notes From HQ

The Gamers Came Sweeping Down The Plains

I saw something amazing at SoonerCon in Oklahoma City. I saw lots of young gamers playing Network tournaments with older gamers—because the older gamers *invited* them. It was refreshing.

Too often I've attended conventions—including the GEN CON® Game Fair and the RPGA® Network's own WINTER FANTASY™—where young gamers were on hand, but the “adults” shirked getting into tournaments with them. Many of our “adult” members think playing events with youngsters cuts down on the fun; they say kids don't know the rules well enough or play too chaotically. I know many DMs who avoid running sessions with young people, saying kids disrupt the game.

All of those claims by adult gamers *can* be true. But I've noticed in my long years of running Network tournaments that the same can be said of many adult gamers. The issue of getting young people into the hobby has been championed and debated in our Letters section. I'm glad the issue is getting more attention, and I'm glad we have more and more game masters out there who welcome young players.

I ran a Living City team event at SoonerCon in which the oldest person at the table was 18. I judged another session (gosh, I'm tired of running *Bitter Harvest*), where the best player at the table was 14—he role played circles around the adults. There was even a 14-year-old running Network tournaments. The adult gamers in his session said they had a great time and gave him advice he was eager to accept. There were several families present at the convention, and the adults encouraged their children to discover the fun of gaming and science fiction.

SoonerCon was chaired by member Marc Smith, and the gaming was handled by members Nathan Carpenter, Scott Douglas, Robert Burns, and Craig Petillo. The gaming guest of honor was Ed Greenwood, who ran two Network benefit tournaments. The convention's charity was Citizens Concerned for Children, an organization that helps children involved with the local Foster Family program. Between the gaming activities and the science fiction goings on, about \$1,400 was raised. SoonerCon drew well over a thousand gaming and

science fiction fans and was held in two hotels separated by what seemed to be the world's biggest truck stop.

The convention had several memorable events—including the Network club Darkmore, which has so many members they fielded five teams for the team event. The rivalry was friendly, but fierce, with one Darkmore team coming to the table with custom-designed matching armbands.

Transportation to and from the convention was memorable, as most of the convention guests were scheduled to fly American Airlines, which had just started a strike. Marc Smith went to the airport seven times trying to pick up fantasy guest of honor Steve Brust. And Realms creator Ed Greenwood of Canada was lost somewhere over the states for several hours, as the airline agents couldn't seem to remember what flight they put him on. Ed ended up in Houston for a while, but he eventually made it to the convention.

More than a dozen people joined the Network before the awards ceremony concluded Sunday afternoon. I came back to Milwaukee with fond memories and a stack of membership forms for Char to enter into the computer.

Renewal Woes

Although our membership renewal rate is healthy, it isn't what we'd like it to be. If you are a member pondering whether to renew, drop us a letter about your dilemma. What don't you like about your Network membership? What can we do to make the Network more fulfilling for you?

It's easier for the Network to meet the needs of the members if the members tell us what those needs are. When you said you didn't want the organization's name to change, you got it to stay the same. When you said you didn't want to be able to vote for yourself in Network tournaments, you got a new voting form with that change. We strive to make this organization work for you. If you have suggestions for services we can provide for your local gaming groups, we'd like to hear them.

This is your club.

Winning Writers

Our annual club Decathlon features a scenario-writing competition. Many clubs entered this past year, including Rathskeller Gamers, Midwest Masters, PM Players, Awesome Gamers Yacht Club, ARC Fellowship, Brisbane League of Adventurers, Fellowship of Steel, The Club, GEAR, the Players Guild of Central Oklahoma, and more. Thanks to our club authors, we have a good selection of new events. Several of the tournaments scheduled for this coming GEN CON Game Fair are provided by our Network clubs. They are:

AD&D® Game Benefit, Marius The Majestyk, by Todd Lambertson and Tim Steed of the Fellowship of Steel.

AD&D Game Special, Piper's Hill, by Nicky Rea and Carla Hollar of ARC Fellowship.

AD&D Game Masters, Shadows of Ravens Bluff, by Michael Whelan, John Baillie, and David Yarrow of the Brisbane League of Adventurers.

AD&D Game Grand Masters, Polar Scare, by Tim Steed.

AD&D Game RAVENLOFT™ event, To Haunt A Ghost, by Carl Longely and A.J. Dent of Rathskeller Gamers.

Paranoia, Undocumented Features, by Scott Nicholson of the Players Guild of Central Oklahoma.

Network Salute

Thanks this issue go to Don Weatherbee of New Jersey. Don painstakingly has been keeping track of our Network Living City participants, charting the careers of more than 1,000 player characters. Thanks to Don we can tell where the hotbeds of L.C. activities are, who has the highest level characters, and which PCs nobly lost their lives in defense of Ravens Bluff. Don also recently penned his first L.C. event, *Spirits of the Night*.

Thanks to members like Don, Ravens Bluff continues to grow and prosper.

Take Care,

Jean

The Living City

Vast Brewing Company

James Patrick Buchanan

"Doth it not show vilely in me to desire small beer?"

King Henry IV, part II—William Shakespeare

The rented homes along Settler avenue are the first residences for many newly arrived Scarsdale immigrants, until they can afford to move into better parts of the city. This boardwalk avenue is also home to one of Ravens Bluff's most successful businesses, Vast Brewing Company.

The owner and chief brewmaster is Puget Saylor. He is the man who will hire the player characters for adventures detailed at the end of the article.

Puget "Busy Bee" Saylor

Zero Level Male Human Brewmaster

STR: 11

INT: 18

WIS: 17

DEX: 16

CON: 10

CHA: 16

COM: 16

AC Normal: 8

AC Rear: 10

Hit Points: 6

Alignment: Lawful Good

Languages: Common

Age: 55

Height: 5' 10"

Weight: 190 lbs

Hair: Gray

Eyes: Sea green

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, dart

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Brewing (19), etiquette (15), reading/writing (17), common

Magical Items: *beads of brewing* (see end of article), *ring of mind shielding*

Puget usually wears a colorful kilt, short tunic, and long cape, all made of silk. He wears leather boots in winter and sandals during summer. Puget keeps his beard short and neatly trimmed, while his long hair is woven

into a single braid that hangs down the center of his back. The end of his braid is weighted down with a gilded sphere the size of a chicken's egg. He carries a dagger, along with three darts, on his belt. Puget's voice is smooth and he always uses excessive hand movements. An extrovert, he will politely talk to anyone about any topic, especially when the subjects are Vast beers, the brewers guild, or the city's beer culture.

Puget, a third generation brewmaster, has run the family business for the past 25 years. With his extraordinary leadership and explosive personal energy, Vast Brewing has become the city's largest brewing company in both profits and production. For example, after many months of negotiations with Chief Constable Rolf "Sunny" Sunriver, Puget now has an exclusive contract to sell beer rations to the city's police force. He also works with local farmers, to get the best barley, hops, and brewing yeasts that money can buy. Puget evenly divides his working hours between the company office, inspecting the brewing process, attempting to create new brands of beer, improving his existing labels, and working in the brewers guild hall. As Puget works ten to twelve hours each day, Vast brewery workers have nicknamed him, "the Busy Bee."

Puget is the current guildmaster of the brewers guild. Puget, his daughter Europa, and the other brewery owners are working on a shared long range goal: To make Ravens Bluff the pinnacle beer brewing city in all the Realms. Consequently, the brewers guild holds annual beer fairs, to improve the reputation of all city-brewed beers. These beer fairs are held during the summer months in the largest public parks. To increase attendance, the fairs have become the center for brewery sponsored drama and music, helping many traveling theater groups and musicians earn a living.

After business hours, Puget can be found within the city's many restaurants and taverns, having conversations with people who drink, or don't drink, Vast beers.

Europa "Captain Vast" Saylor

Zero Level Female Human Brewmaster

STR: 12 (23)

INT: 18

WIS: 16

DEX: 15

CON: 14

CHA: 17

COM: 17

AC Normal: 9

AC Rear: 10

Hit Points: 6

Alignment: Lawful Good

Languages: Common

Age: 25

Height: 5' 6"

Weight: 140 lbs

Hair: Light brown

Eyes: Hazel

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, staff

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Brewing (18), etiquette (15), land-based riding (11), reading/writing (17), common

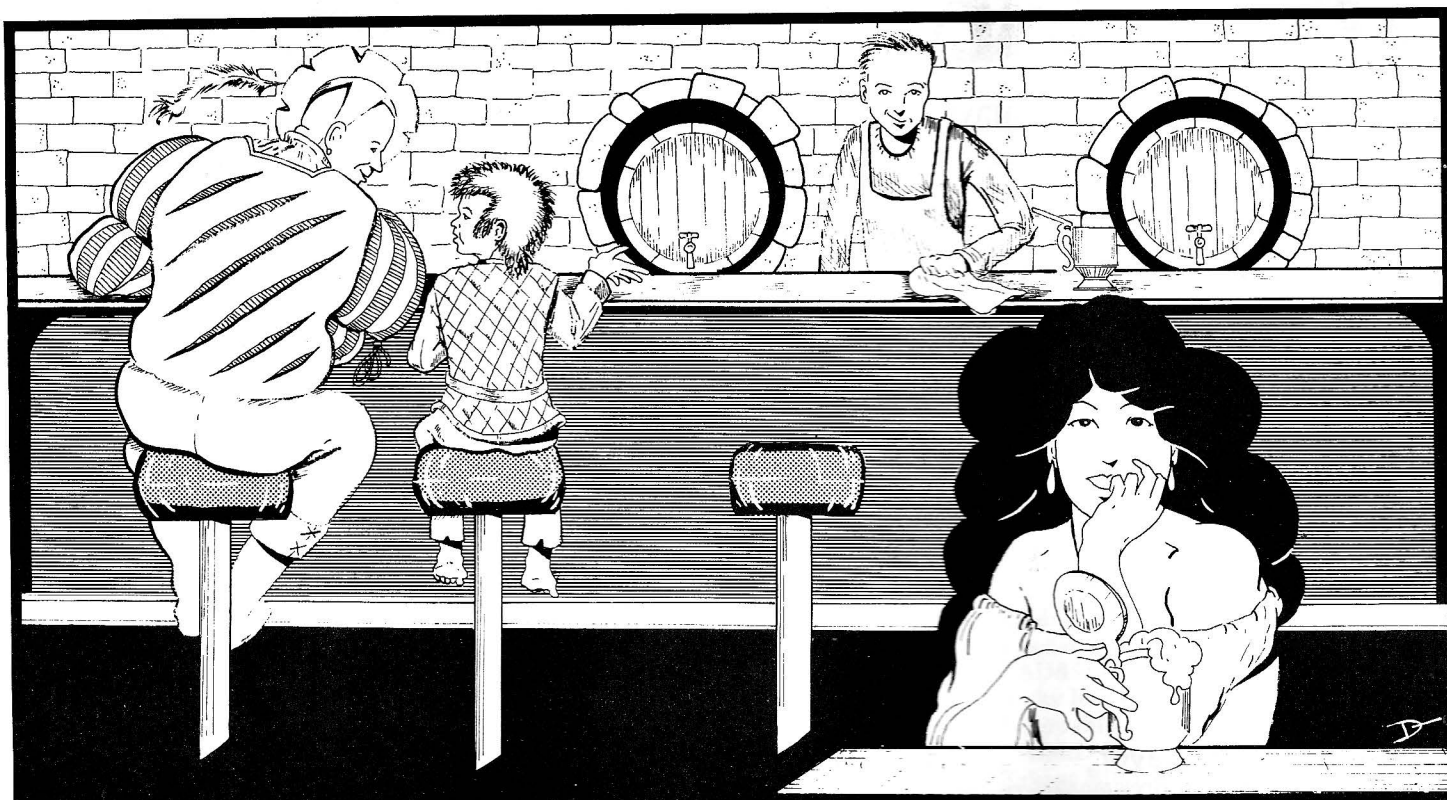
Magical items: *dagger +3*, *girdle of cloud giant strength*

Europa keeps her knee-length hair in two braids. Each braid is weighted at the end by a gilded sphere, about the size of a walnut. These trinkets are worth 14 gold coins each, mostly for the items' artisanship. To protect herself, she always wears her *girdle* and openly carries a normal dagger hanging on her belt, while her magic dagger is hidden in one of her boots.

When Europa is at the brewery, she dresses like the other brewers: high boots, trousers, tunic, gloves, and a leather apron. Outside the brewery, she wears fashions ranging from traditional Ffolk dresses to silk imports from Kara-Tur.

As Puget's eldest child, Europa will someday inherit ownership of the company. She is learning every aspect of the brewing business and currently works in the malt house, with the title of master maltster (see The Brewery for more details.)

Even away from the brewery, Europa is as driven as her father to make their family's business the most successful



brewery in the entire Realms. About three years ago, she began negotiating with passenger ship stewards to serve only Vast beer to their passengers. So far, 19 of the largest passenger ships that make Ravens Bluff their home port have signed exclusive contracts with Vast Brewing. To get more contracts, Europa spends two to three evenings each week at the docks, talking to ship's officers. This has earned her the nickname "Captain Vast."

Europa's philanthropy is well known to most citizens in Ravens Bluff. She has organized many special business, community, ethnic, personal, and religious festivals that are held in the company's beer hall. There is even one for the city's halfling population. One reason why Vast beer hall festivals are always well attended is that Vast beer is sold at half or one quarter its normal price. Europa uses these events as opportunities to get to know the many cultures in Ravens Bluff and to introduce Vast beer to more potential customers.

The Brewery

Vast Brewing Company is located in five buildings. All brewery buildings have

brownstone walls, light red tile roofs, and large windows that let in plenty of light. Each building and its relationship to the others is detailed below.

A. The Spring

The smallest building on the grounds keeps the brewery's spring from freezing in winter. Located 30 feet above the other buildings, this spring gives a slow but steady flow of naturally carbonated, very cold, pure water. This water is stored in a reservoir until it is needed. Then, when valves are opened, this water flows by gravity into the malt house and brewing building through narrow copper pipes.

B. Coal Bin

This coal stockpile is used to keep the brewery buildings warm in winter.

C. The Malt House

This building has a loading dock that can serve five wagons at the same time. This is where farmers bring wagon loads of barley, hops, and yeast to the brewery. They also carry away the brewery's waste products, which the farmers use as animal feed. Inside the walls is an area where the grain is cleaned, threshed, and sieved by

machine (see below). There are also copper steeping vats, tiled germination floors, and cast iron drying kilns that are heated by magic. These are used to help ferment the grain and spring water into a mixture called wort. In the cellar, four horses turn a capstan that transfers the horses' power, through a series of cogwheels, to the grain milling machines.

D. Brewing Building

PCs will notice that the interior air always has a faint scent of freshly brewed beer. Here, wort from the malt house is poured into magically heated copper kettles, where it is cooked with hops. After being drained out of the beer kettles, the wort is cooled and placed into fermentation tanks, where yeast is added. Then, the beer is carted down a ramp, into Vast's extensive underground storage cellar that is below the brewing building. The beer is placed into huge wooden storage barrels, to age in near-freezing temperatures. This cellar is kept cool by ice supplied by the Mage Darra Winn. (see "The Ice House" in POLYHEDRON® Newszine #52) The cellar inventory holds thousands of kegs and is worth more than 25,000 gold

coins. After aging, the beer is brought up to the racking room, where the finished product is filtered to remove all insoluble waste by-products, then poured into barrels or bottles. Elsewhere in the city, these barrels are constructed by the city's Cooperage guild, while the bottles are made by the city's Ceramics guild. Located in the east wall is a second loading dock. This is where kegs and bottles of beer are loaded into wagons, driven by members of the Teamsters guild, for transit to both local and intercity markets.

E. Company Offices

A staff of 10 clerks keeps all the company's paperwork in order. Puget and Europa both have private offices here. The strong room is where the Sayors keep all their important written records, 6d6 *beads of brewing*, along with a brass tablet that shows how to make the *beads of brewing*. This room has an iron door protected by two rugged combination locks of masterful quality. Each lock has a -60 modifier to open locks attempts; the vault is not impervious to *knock spells*, but it takes three of them to open the door when it is closed and locked. Only Puget and Europa know the combinations.

F. Vast Beer Hall

This is currently the only tavern and dance hall Vast Brewing owns. Hanging on the walls are tapestries, paintings, and the mounted heads of game animals. There are 15 glass display cases that hold dozens of brewing and tavern artifacts. The cases are locked with key locks of excellent quality and have a -20 modifier to open locks attempts. Thirsty customers can purchase Vast's own lager beer, ale, and rye whisky. The only non-Vast beverage sold here is Starlight, a sweet wine made from raisins. See Europa Saylor's background for more details on events held at the beer hall.

History of the Vast Brewing Company

Puget Saylor's grandfather was Hoosier Saylor, an accomplished brewmaster from the city of Callidyr in the Moonshae Isles. After he had mastered the art of brewing, Hoosier heard that there were no large breweries anywhere inside the Vast. Hoosier promptly moved to Ravens Bluff to set up his own brewery. After getting a room in an inn,

Hoosier attempted to find water pure enough to brew good quality beer. He spent many days tasting the waters of all the rivers, wells, and natural springs in the area. One of his outings lead him to some overgrown ruins that predated the destruction of ancient Sarbreen. By careful observation, he deduced that he had found the remains of the largest brewery he had ever seen. As he dug deeper into the ruins, Hoosier discovered a brass tablet with an inscription on how to make something called "*beads of brewing*" (see the description at the end of the article). Hoosier then asked himself, "Where did this old brewery get its brewing water?" Northeast of the ruins, he discovered a natural spring. When Hoosier tasted the spring's water, Hoosier knew he had discovered water with which he could brew beer of such high quality that it would be almost impossible for mortals to drink just one mug. By spending nearly every copper piece he owned, Hoosier bought the lands around the spring, razed the ruins, and built the stone brewery buildings that stand today.

The Brewers

All brewers who work for Vast Brewing, or any other brewhouse, are members of the brewers guild. These men and women work eight hour shifts, about three hours less than in other breweries. To keep up with the increasing demand for Vast beer, the Sayors have their brewery on continuous operation, with three shifts each day. There is mutual respect and trust between the company's brewers and the Saylor family. Vast brewers earn high wages, have steady employment, a low accident rate compared with other city industries, and two mugs of complementary beer for each brewer, for each shift worked. Consequently, the brewers have high morale and are for the most part satisfied with their jobs.

These brewers know that Europa uses her *girdle of cloud giant strength* to carry heavy objects that would normally take several low skilled brewers to move. Members of the brewers guild have noted that since Europa obtained her Girdle, there are now three fewer brewery workers employed in the Malt House. Accordingly, many of the rank and file employees at Vast think that if too many magical items show up in the brewery, fewer of their low- and semi-skilled brewers will be employed

at Vast. This idea makes some brewers feel uneasy about their future with the brewery.

Brewers (30 per shift): Int Average; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6, 1d3; SA Nil; SZ M; ML 9; XP 15 each.

If forced to melee, these people will fight with mash stirring paddles and grain shovels that inflict the same damage as clubs.

The Beer

Vast Brewing is marketing 15 brands of medium to high quality lager beer, ale, and rye whisky. The most popular label is "Vast's Best." Ninety-five percent of Vast's products is sold in kegs and is labeled this way:

(the brand name)

**The very best beer in all the Vast
Vast Brewing Company
Settler Avenue
Ravens Bluff**

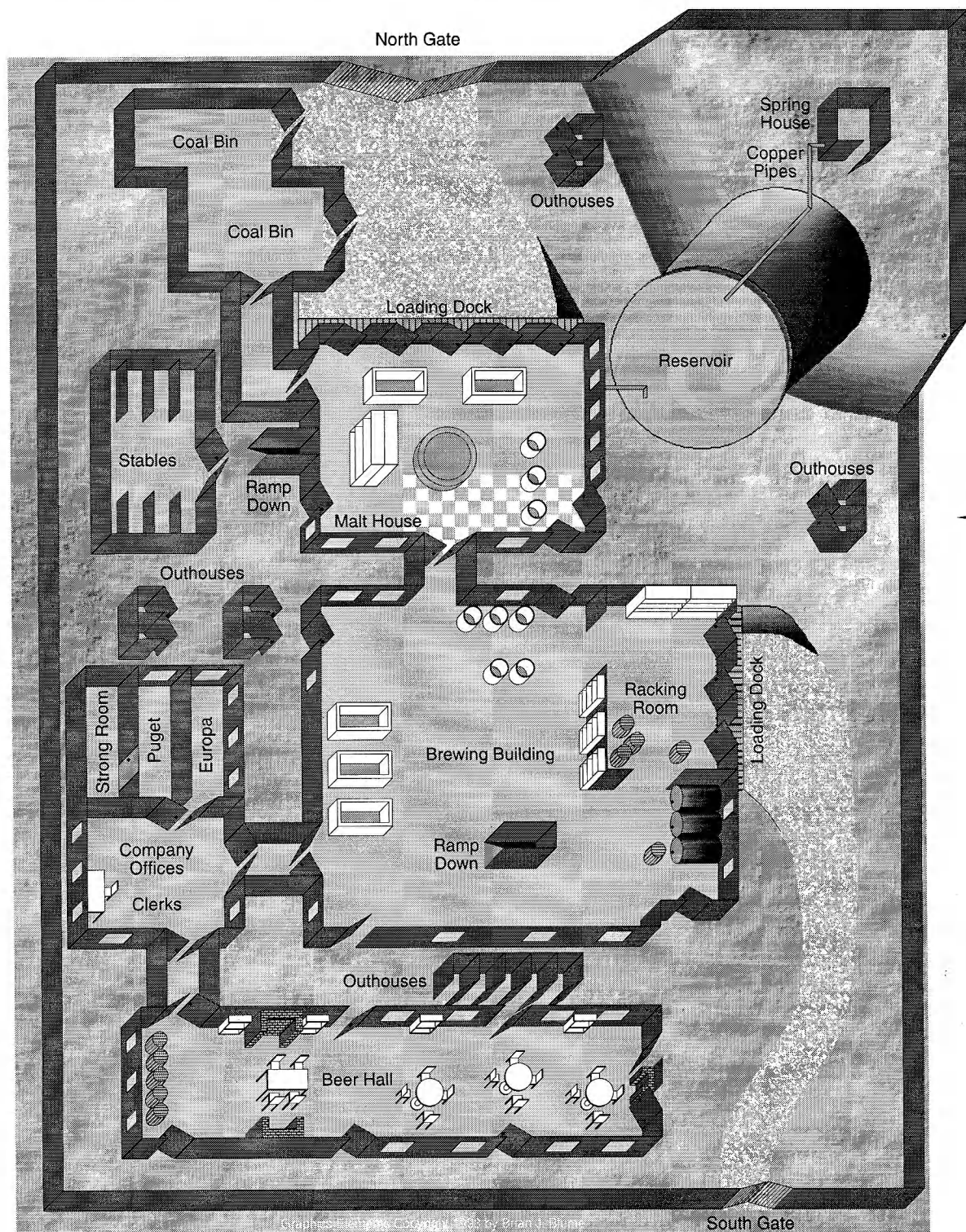
The other five percent is a special kind of beer, a mixture of malt and hops, that is sold in pottery bottles, labeled as a "tonic." This tonic is sold to the public only by those who specialize in healing. One example is The Bandaged Wound (see POLYHEDRON Newszine #84).

Adventure Ideas for Vast Brewing Company

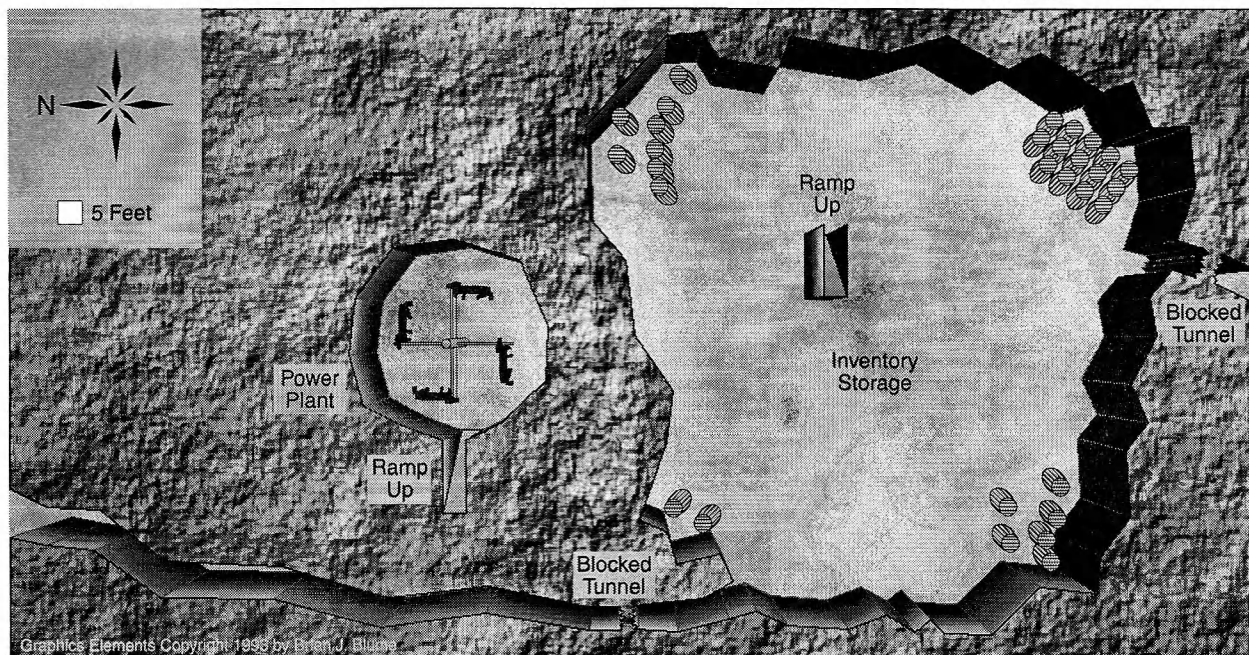
* Once every three months, about five dozen 20-gallon kegs of Vast's most expensive beer turns up missing. Puget suspects that during the midnight to dawn shift, several thieves, dressed as teamsters and driving two wagons, are able to bluff their way into the plant with fake shipping documents. Moreover, at least seven plant employees have been mesmerized by magic into helping the thieves load kegs into their wagons. The thieves are hard to capture, as their next target is another city brewery. After the PCs bring the thieves to justice, Puget will pay them seven hundred silver coins or the same value in kegs of beer. A variation on this idea would be the theft of the company payroll.

* Vast Brewing exports beer, by ship and caravan, to other cities in the Vast. However, a pirate captain from the Sea

VAST BREWING COMPANY



VAST BREWING COMPANY - UNDERGROUND LEVEL



of Fallen Stars has bribed a greedy shipping clerk, who informs her whenever a shipment of over 35 kegs is transported outside the city walls. The PCs' mission is to discover who is selling the pirates the time, routes, and mode of transportation of their beer shipments. However, as this clerk sends his information in allegorical code that is hidden inside what looks like innocent personal letters, finding the spy will be a difficult task.

* The owners of Buck Beer, a long established city brewery, are angry at losing their exclusive beer rations contract with the city guard. These men and women want revenge.

Buck Beer tricks the local teamsters guild into boycotting Vast Brewing Company. Furthermore, Buck Beer employees who pose as Teamsters, attempt to block the brewery gates at Vast, preventing anyone else from hauling the raw materials of brewing into, or full beer kegs out of, the plant. Buck Beer spies may also attempt to poison the spring, burn down the brewery, etc. The PCs are hired to discover who started and is keeping the Teamster's boycott going. If Puget learns that Buck Beer is attempting to

drive Vast Brewing out of business, Puget will use his position in the brewers guild to get the city legal system to collect any damages this illegal blockade caused Vast Brewing.

Buck Beer hires a band of thugs and sends them into the streets to burn down Vast's brewery buildings: The fighting between the two brewhouses may become so bloody that martial law may need to be imposed to restore civil order.

* Taverns are relabeling kegs of inferior brands of beer with the Vast trademark and then selling this small beer as real Vast beer. Rebranding kegs of cheap beer gives tavern owners more profit, but gives Vast Brewing an undeserved public reputation for making and selling bitter beers. The player characters are hired to stop this illegal practice by exposing one or two tavern owners who rebrand beer kegs.

New magic item:

Beads of brewing: These beads might be mistaken for common beads, but when one or two are dropped into a vat of brewing beer, they will improve the beer's color, odor, texture, and flavor.

Light brown colored *beads* will increase beer quality by 25 percent, while dark brown colored *beads* will increase beer quality by 50 percent. Both types of bead will also quadruple the beer's shelf life, extending the distance upgraded beer can be transported without spoilage. Only two *beads* can be used in any one batch of beer of up to one thousand gallons. Only wizards trusted by the brewers guild, such as Ashakar Piscelene of Ashakar's Accessories (see LC4, *Port of Ravens Bluff*, pages 36 to 38) know how to make *beads* of brewing. These wizards sell *beads* of brewing only to guild members who own breweries within Ravens Bluff's political jurisdiction and are committed to making their city the paramount beer-brewing center in the Realms.

Light Brown

XP Value: 50 each
GP Value: 50 each

Dark Brown

XP Value: 100 each
GP Value: 100 each

The Door Islands

(Apparently called Door Countie, Westconsin in ancient days)



City



Ruins



Village

KEY



Ancient Installation



Swamp



Forest



Mar Tinet

Grenby Water

Unknown Furrin Lands

Ferry

Metal Wood
Danger Road

Main Island

The Molten River

The Causeway

Thunder Road

Onay River

Grenby

To Ruins of
Marwok

Grenby Channel

Mudd Island

The Road

The Tower

The Other Road

The Dead Zone

Tower Island

The Dunes

Lake Mitchgloom

Beware the
Zepher

In the ancient days, the
locations marked with flags
appear to have been called:

1. Luxemburg
2. Kewaunee (Ruins)
3. Algoma
4. Forestville
5. Sturgeon Bay (Ruins)
6. Egg Harbor
7. Ephriam
8. Sister Bay

Graphics Elements Copyright 1992, 1993 by Brian J. Blume

The Door Islands

Kerry D. Jordan

"The Door Islands? Sure, I can tell you about the islands. I've been knocking around here for almost 15 years. I must know just about everything there is to know about them.

"Everybody has heard about the fishing and the cherree orchards on these Islands; most locals make their living either fishing or farming. The Grenby Water and Lake Mitchgloom provide plenty of fish, even though the fishermen don't go too far away from shore. The deep water's filled with strange and dangerous creatures, or so they say.

"The biggest city around is Grenby, which is on the mainland. It used to be a city of the ancients, but after the cataclysm it was nothing but ruins. Then the locals rebuilt what was left and started a town there. It's the biggest town I ever seen. The way I figure, it must've had 'bout 10,000 sentients living there!

"People can pretty much come and go as they want. The biggest cryptic alliances in the city are the Restorationists and the Healers, who run a hospital.

"The only real problem with Grenby is that every five winters a brigade of serfs called the Pillagers of Technology lays siege to the place. They don't attack any of the other towns in the area. I think it's because they don't figure the others are worth their time. So far, the people of Grenby have been able to drive off the serfs, mostly on account of the big "sun bolt" cannon they got. Biggest gun I ever did see.

"Grenby ain't the only city on the mainland. South of Grenby is the ruins of Manwok. I've heard that Manwok was once a thriving city of the ancients, but the cataclysm changed all that. Now the city has only two kinds of inhabitants: attercops and orlens. The attercops control the majority of the ruins while the orlens maintain a small community on the northern outskirts of Manwok. There're said to be plenty of artifacts in the ruins, just waiting for someone daring enough to get past the attercops' webs.

"The orlens don't mind visitors so long as they follow the laws. One

interesting thing about the orlens is that they hold competitions each year to see who'll be the new town guards. The game they play is based on an ancient's game called "futbole." The only weapons the players can use are quarterstuffs, and they can't use mutant powers. They ain't meant to kill the other players, but that happens sometimes. Visitors can watch, but not play.

"The island right off the mainland is called Main Island. Between it and the mainland, in Grenby Channel, are the ruins of a city once called Kewaunee. The ruins make travelling the southern end of the Channel nearly impossible. Part of the Kewaunee ruins are on shore, but hardly anyone ever goes there. That's because they're infested with obbs. Last I heard of anyone going there was five years back, and no one came back that time.

"The north end of the Main Island is where Metal Wood stands. Metal Wood is a small forest where dangerous live metal walks around. It tries to kill anything it thinks is human. Nobody's really sure what else is there¹.

"Main Island is also the home of "The Zepher." Nobody's sure what The Zepher is, either. The name comes from the gentle breeze that always blows through there. Anybody that goes there dies. You'll avoid it too, if you want to live as long as I have. Now I've heard tell that there are ancient installations within The Zepher, but I've never met anyone who survived a trip to the place².

"The next island is Tower Island, named after the ancient tower there. For decades it was empty, but then a stranger showed up about ten years back and set up shop. Nobody knows too much about him, 'cept he's called Victor and he's an examiner. He never rubs elbows with any of the other locals, and nobody bothers him. In fact, most of the locals are kind of scared of him. They say he performs strange experiments in the tower, using forgotten technology. The only reason they haven't driven him off is that he fixed the tower so it shines light on the reefs off the island, helping the fishermen.

"There's also an area called the Dead Zone on Tower Island. You'd best avoid it, since it's a source of the glow. In fact,

the glow's killed off all the vegetation and animals in the area, 'cept the land sharks. Those beasts've been drastically altered, and they're resistant to the curse. It's said the source of the glow is an ancient installation located in the exact middle of the Dead Zone.

"Mudd Island is located just north of Tower Island, west of the one called Last Town Island. Mudd Island is a complete swamp. It's crawling with arns, gators, hissers, soul beshes, and other nasty critters.

"Now I think it's about time you started your own knocking about. I'll tell you no more about the Door Islands. There are just some things you got to find out for yourself. And I wouldn't want to ruin all your fun, would I?

—Bram Crusoe, Human Enforcer

GM's Notes

¹ Metal Wood is really an ancient wildlife preserve. After seeing the destruction of the cataclysm, the preserve's control computer came to the decision that all humans were out to destroy the environment. Since its primary duty was to stop environmental destruction, it reprogrammed all of the ecobots in the area to kill any humans found.

The center of the preserve is the location of a forest ranger's station, where the control computer is located and where the ecobots return for repairs. There is an ecobot patrolling the area up to 50 meters from the station.

² "The Zepher" is a form of mutated wheat that produces microscopic seeds which require thought patterns to germinate. These seeds glide through the air with the help of the breeze, which is caused by the mother plants, which have a limited form of weather control. After becoming airborne, these seeds are unknowingly inhaled by creatures in the area. When these creatures fall asleep (and their mental defenses are lowest), the seeds psionically attack the creatures' minds. The attack takes the form of a dream in which the creatures believe they are attacked by a shadowy beast. If the creature wins the mental battle, it receives experience and wakes. If the seed wins, the creature is brain dead and a new plant sprouts from the body in 1d4 days. □

River Rats

A GREYHAWK® Setting Adventure for
Player Characters of 4th to 6th Level

by Keith Polster

Players' Introduction

You sit in the conference room of the Greyhawk Adventurers Guild, waiting for an assignment that will bring you gold and fame. After all, that's why you joined the guild. Members are assigned to investigate ruins, explore dungeons, and slay dragons—all ventures that yield treasure.

Your wait is short. Waltzing across the chamber toward you, his head bathed in a blue-gray fog of cigar smoke, is the assistant guildmaster. The dwarf glares at you disdainfully.

"So, you maggots," bellows Zuaak in a voice that will echo in your head for days. "I hope ye're ready for yer next assignment!"

Finishing off the first putrid cigar and pulling out another, the dwarf continues. "This is an important job I'm about ta give ya scum, so you'd better listen up. And if ya do good, maybe ye'll get yourselves out of da gutter. Last night I got a visit from Lord Zoran Sarraith, a rich Rhennee who forked out a big retainer for da guild ta do a job with no questions asked. Ye're ta meet him at da River Rat, a central gathering place for Rhennee in the river quarter. It's along da Strip, and it's full of Rhennee, so watch your P's and Q's about their strange customs or ye'll end up as rat food on da bank of da Selintan."

Zuaak takes a bite out of his cigar, swallows it, and adds, "Ya lumps belong to Lord Zoran for the next week. I sure hope ye last!" With a wicked snicker and a belch, the repugnant dwarf leaves.

DM Background

The player characters are being set up. Several years ago, Lord Zoran located the *hasty barge of Nyr Dyv*. This magical barge is an ancient relic of the Rhennee with special powers that allow it to travel fast and far, with



little chance of it being attacked by monsters in the Nyr Dyv. Zoran stole the *hasty barge* from a Rhennee named Dolcan Esquard, whom he killed during the theft.

Zoran wanted the *hasty barge* so he could better serve his masters, the Cult of the Shriven Sickie. The members of the Shriven Sickie faithfully serve Nerull, the god of darkness, death, and dissolution. The cult was pleased when Zoran announced he had the *barge*. But as of yesterday the cult is very upset. The *hasty barge* has been stolen again, and Zoran has no clue who took it.

During the adventure, the PCs will be under the watchful eye of Grotnek Urteknis, a brutal half-orc mercenary employed by the Shriven Sickie. Grotnek and the forces of the Shriven Sickie will shadow the PCs until they have recovered the *hasty barge*, then they will try to dispose of the heroes. The Sickie opposes witnesses.

You leave the guild headquarters and walk down the Strip toward your appointment. Shadows coat the streets as night comes to the city. Eyes peer out from the darkness as you journey deeper into the Strip, and the few souls you encounter are uncouth and seedy. Your journey abruptly ends as you find yourselves before the battered structure called the River Rat. Loud laughter and song spills from the place.

The windows of the building are boarded up, and several unconscious people lie sprawled in front of this disgusting establishment. While you take in the scenery, the laughing ceases, the swinging doors burst open, and a drunken patron is tossed out into the street, sliding a couple of feet in the fresh mud to rest before you. After a short pause, the laughing and shouting of obscenities from within again rises to a roar.

When the PCs enter the River Rat, all conversation ceases and the patrons stare at the newcomers. After several silent moments, the chatter begins again. The patrons never quiet down for long. The River Rat is crowded, and the PCs will have to elbow their way up to the bar.

None of the Rhennee patrons will have anything to do with the PCs; however, the bartender is willing to point out Lord Zoran if the PCs ask.

You look where the bartender points and see a finely-dressed Rhennee. As he begins to speak, you notice a large scar curving from just below his left ear to his throat.

"I am Lord Zoran," he begins. "I presume you are from the guild? I do not believe you've been told my problem, so I will start at the beginning. A barge that has been in my family for more three generations was stolen from its dock at Barge End last night. During the bloody theft, two of my closest friends were slain and my wives were beaten and tossed overboard. I wish my barge returned, and I am willing to pay handsomely for it. If you bring this barge back, I will see that Zuaak gives you each 700 gold for your troubles, with an additional 300 gold each if you bring back the head of the scoundrel who beat my wives.

"I and all of my children were born upon that barge, and I mean to have it back! I have business to attend to before you depart, so I shall meet you at Barge End in 30 minutes. Do not be late." Lord Zoran nimbly springs to his feet and ducks out a side door, leaving you to exit this hole on your own.

Barge End

Barge End is a docking place for the Rhennee's barges in the murky, mosquito-infested Selintan backwater. When the PCs arrive, two of Zoran's lackeys escort them to the lord's pursuit vessel, where they are presented to Lord Zoran and Dmitri Valonis, the vessel's captain for this mission.

The scent of the stagnant waters of the Selintan fills your nostrils as the guides take you to Lord Zoran. As you travel deeper into Barge End, you see more than 40 barges docked along the back water wharf. Your guides escort you across a few scattered planks and onto the deck of an impressive two-masted barge. Standing on the deck, flanked by several Rhennee, is your employer.

Getting right down to business, Zoran gestures to the man on his right, "This is Dmitri Valonis, one of the fastest bargewrights on the Selintan. You are to help our combined crews assure the return of my barge. This two-masted barge, the Dyvwraith, will easily catch the

thieves in two days, before the scoundrels can lose themselves in Wooly Bay. You leave at first light, and do not forget the bonus!"

After a few words with his men, Lord Zoran disappears into the night mist. A Rhennee tells you to stow your gear and get a few hours of sleep, for you leave at first light.

The Dyvwraith is manned by nine Rhennee. Four of these men are members of Lord Zoran's personal guard but are not members of the Shriven Sickie. The remaining five are Dmitri and his master bargewrights. None of the crew are members of the cult of Nerull. They are of honorable Rhennee background and will follow the words of Dmitri to the letter.

Zoran's guards (4): AC 6; MV 12; HD 4 (F4); hp 24 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL NE

These men were told to make sure all of the thieves of the *hasty barge* are killed and to help Grotnek slay the PCs after the barge has been retrieved. These men are Zoran's regular crew on the *hasty barge*, and they know how to pilot the magical craft. They are also familiar with Grotnek and his squad. The barge men speak little with the PCs during the journey. Observant PCs notice that the crew does not mingle with them.

Dmitri Valonis: AC 4 (leather armor +2); MV 12; HD 7 (F7); hp 45; THACO 14; #AT: 1; Dmg: 1-8 +2 (*long sword* +2); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL N

Dmitri wears a *medallion of ESP* that can be used three times a day.

Dmitri is 24 years old, 5'1" tall, and weighs 130 lbs. Despite his small size, this Rhennee is the best bargewright in the Greyhawk area. Since his latest barge race victory, Dmitri has acquired quite a following among the Rhennee and has decided to help Lord Zoran only to prove that he can accomplish something that the Rhennee lord cannot. Since Rhennee lordship is based on one's power and deeds, Dmitri has much to gain by returning the barge.

Dmitri seeks to further his power base at any cost. He treats the PCs well, but does not reveal much regarding his goals. He is polite to any spellcasters, for they are rare and their favors are considered a means of gaining power among the Rhennee. As far as the

mission is concerned, Dmitri follows Zoran's orders until he is betrayed or until he can change the rules of the game to better suit his own needs.

Dmitri's Barge Crew (4): AC 7; MV 12; HD 5 (F5); hp 30 each; THACO 17; #AT: 1; Dmg 1-8+1 (long sword + STR bonus); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL N

These men are loyal to Dmitri and are his hand-picked crew of talented bargewrights. They are all Rhennee, and they will speak rarely to the PCs, as sailing the barge consumes most of their time. However, if the player characters befriend Dmitri, the crew will treat the PCs with mild respect. The opposite applies if Dmitri holds the PCs in low regard. Each of these men carries a long sword and knife and 4d10 gold coins.

The River Blue

Allow the player characters to spend time role playing with members of the crew for the remainder of the day. When it gets near sunset, read the following:

The gypsy folk move their craft quickly through the placid waters of the Selintan. When the crew finally anchors near the center of the river, one of Dmitri's men tells you this is to reduce the likelihood of a bandit attack. As the daylight fades, the bright moon Raenei glimmers overhead, sending fleeting shadows across the calm river water.

As you start to settle in for the night, you are interrupted by Dmitri.

"As you can see my friends, it is a splendid evening. I do not wish to cast a pall on the atmosphere, but I believe we are being followed. A group of men on the river road has been shadowing us since we left Greyhawk." As he points off the port bow, you see the flickering light of a campfire.

Dmitri and the Rhennee are confident they are in no danger where they are anchored. However, the lord would not object to the PCs investigating the camp. If the player characters decide to do so, they must swim to the shore 35 feet away. If the party does nothing, the night passes without incident.

The men following the party are Lord Zoran's assassin squad lead by Grotnek. With the help of their Shriven Sickles, Grotnek and his men obtained uniforms of the

Greyhawk Nightwatch Patrol, and are wearing them now. If the PCs approach them, Grotnek and his men present themselves as official members of the Greyhawk Guard with (forged) papers giving them authority to patrol along River Road. As far as the party is concerned, everything looks in order. If the party attacks, Grotnek's men fight to the death while Grotnek escapes.

Grotnek Urtekknis: AC -2 (field plate +1, DEX bonus); MV 9; HD 8 (F8, T8); hp 76; THACO 9; #AT 3/2; Dmg: 1-10+5 (*two-handed sword* +2, STR bonus); SA X4 backstab; SD Nil; AL NE

Grotnek has the following thieving skills: PP 50, OL 55, FT 55, MS 70, HS 50, DN 30, CW 90, RL 15. He carries a *potion of healing* and wears a *necklace of missiles* with one 5-dice missile remaining.

Grotnek is 6'10" tall with thick, black, wavy hair and brown eyes. He weighs a remarkable 352 lbs with not an ounce of fat on him. This repulsive thief chews tobacco and spits great plugs while he talks. His clothes are constantly sweat-stained and malodorous, while his greasy hair falls uncombed around his deep-set coal eyes.

During this encounter, Grotnek will control his considerable temper, but he will throw a tantrum once the party is gone or after he escapes. Although he is the main muscle of the Shriven Sickles, Grotnek watches out for Grotnek above everyone else.

Grotnek's Grunts: AC 6 (leather & DEX 16); MV 12; HD 4 (F4, T3); hp 15 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+1 (short sword +1; SA X2 backstab; SD Nil; AL NE

These men also carry light crossbows with 10 bolts, as well as 2d10 silver coins. Two of the men have bruises covering their faces (the results of Grotnek's bad temper), and each has a scar running from below the ear ending near the throat. These scars are the mark of the Shriven Sickles and are identical to the scar on Lord Zoran. The only way the PCs will see these scars is if they capture or kill the grunts.

The Roaring Rapids

The following morning the PCs get an early start down the Selintan River.

As the morning floats into afternoon, you find yourselves gazing over the bow of the boat at the river.

Suddenly, the sluggish current increases, and you spot a large sign on the shore that reads "DANGER AHEAD." Before you can warn Dmitri, you see another sign which reads "REAL DANGER AHEAD." The water again increases its speed, and you note a third sign. The words have been crossed out by black paint, but you can make out enough of the letters to know it said, "SERIOUSLY DANGEROUS RAPIDS AHEAD."

Before the rapids can significantly hamper the Rhennee's control of the barge, Dmitri orders his men to navigate toward a stone breakwater off the port bow. As you get closer to this peculiar structure, you notice on the breakwater a small figure—a rather excited gnome. As you steer toward the gnome, you see a huge block and tackle pulley system along the shoreline. Using this system appears to be the only safe way to navigate these savage rapids.

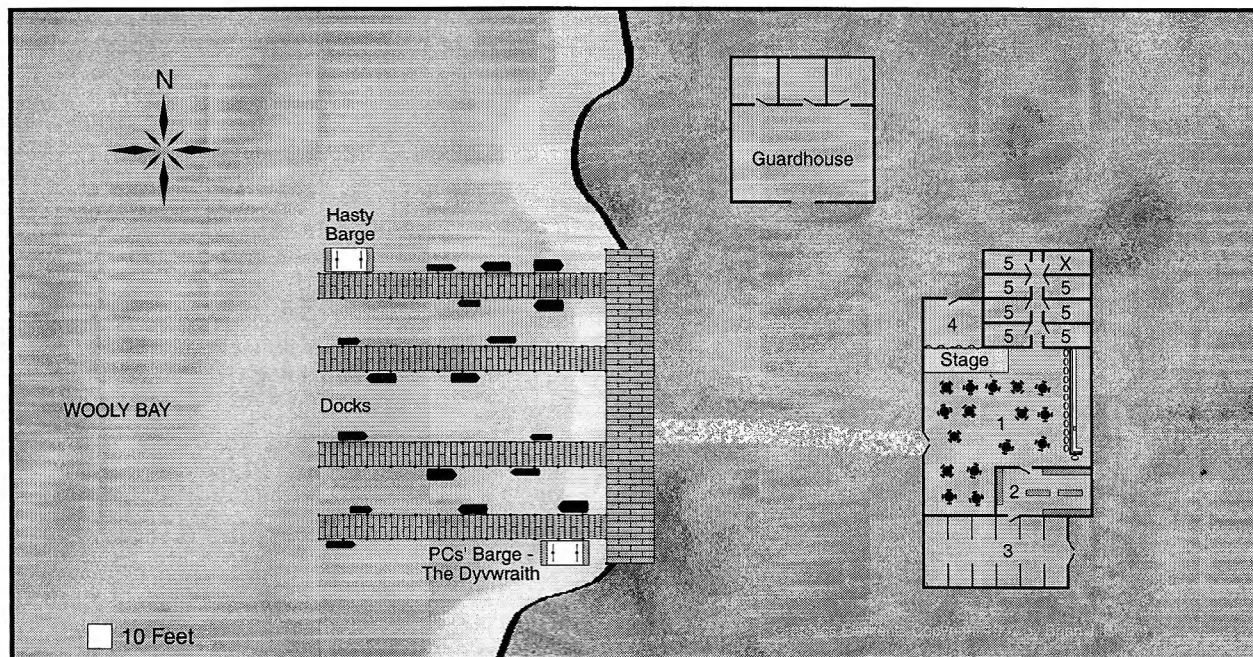
"Hey! Hey you there!" shouts the gnome. "Throw us a line or you'll be wrecked!" You notice that Dmitri reluctantly gives the order to throw the gnome a line.

Any attempt to run the rapids causes the barge to capsize—even though the rapids are not what they seem. Several years ago a brass dragon devised a get-rich-quick plan that would take advantage of all travelers up and down the Selintan River by requiring them to pay for a barge steering service. With the help of a few *earthquake* spells in a *ring of spell storing*, the dragon created his own rapids by altering the pitch and speed of the river. The nearby residents believe the whole process occurred naturally. The dragon and his gnome helpers use illusions to make the rapids seem even fiercer than they are.

This deception has been going on for several years, and only a few of the regular river travelers (including Dmitri) know the secret. They don't, however, wish to upset the dragon by exposing him, so they pay the fees of the barge steering service and continue on their way.

There are seven gnomes involved in the operation, all working for the dragon, magically disguised as the gnome on the breakwater. He goes by the name of Walter Simkins.

The Spotted Cow Inn



The steering process requires nearly 20 minutes of block and tackle pulling, with most of the hard work being faked by the gnomes. During this time, Walter chats with the PCs. He wants to know what they are doing on the river, what they think of the rapids, and what is the current state of politics in Greyhawk. If the PCs try to disbelieve the rapids, Walter becomes angry and threatens that "Nasty things can happen to people who don't consider the rapids fierce and awesome. Nasty things can happen to people who don't pay the barge steering fee."

If the PCs truly upset Walter, Dmitri tries to intercede and begs the PCs to apologize. Walter demands 10 gp per player character—in addition to the barge steering fee. If the PCs refuse, the dragon sinks Dmitri's barge. This will force the PCs to find new transportation to continue the adventure.

On the other hand, if the PCs befriend Walter in his gnome form, he chats pleasantly with them. Some of his phrases include:

"Hey, nice weather we're having, huh?"

"Do you guys fish? I caught a big one yesterday! As big as this barge. It was tasty."

"Are you fellows looking for the bandits in the area?"

"Are you following those other Rhennee that came through here yesterday?"

"Do you know you're being followed?"

"I hear the mayor of Greyhawk is being bribed by the Carpenters' Guild."

"Does it still smell like dead rats in the city?"

Walter's ramblings continue until the barge reaches the far side of the rapids, or until the PCs press Walter for further information. If questioned about any of the above quips, Walter's memory suddenly gets foggy until a few coins are pressed into his greedy palm.

If properly bribed and questioned, Walter has the following additional information:

"A very fast barge crewed by at least six men came through the rapids yesterday. The men on it seemed quite pleased with themselves." Walter didn't learn much from them, as he did most of the talking.

Human and demi-human bandits are common around here, but they leave Walter and his gnomes alone.

"Four or five men are following you. They look like Greyhawk guards, but they're definitely out of their

jurisdiction. Their commander is pretty bad-tempered for a military officer."

Walter Simkins, Brass Dragon: AC

-1; MV 12, fl 30; HD 10; hp 65; THACO 11; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 1-6 + 5/1-6 + 5/4-16 + 5; SA Breath weapon 10d4 + 5, tail slap, wing buffet; SD Nil; MR 15%; S S as gnome, G as dragon; AL CG (neutral tendencies)

Spells carried: *Change self*, *alter self*

Walter would rather talk than fight, but if his secret about the rapids is threatened, he will turn violent. The barge steering service is Walter's means of increasing his horde, and he doesn't want it jeopardized.

Walter's Gnomes (7): AC 10; MV 12; HD 2 (12); hp 6 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Nil; SD Nil; AL NG

Spells carried: *Phantasmal force*, *audible glamer*

The gnomes help Walter create the illusion of the rapids because they are paid well for relatively little work. They attempt to avoid conversation with river travelers, as they are afraid they will burst out laughing at the travelers' gullibility.

The gnomes constructed the block and

tackle rig, and it is sturdy in design. If the river were truly filled with savage rapids, this method of traversing the raging water would work.

Docking for the Night

The evening after the PCs encounter Walter, they arrive at the edge of Wooly Bay, near the Spotted Cow Inn. Dmitri steers the barge toward the docks.

You realize your time is running short as the setting sun glimmers off the edge of Wooly Bay. Just ahead is the famed Spotted Cow Inn, the last stop for weary river travelers before they brave the depths of the gigantic bay. If your elusive adversary has not lost himself in the deep waters, he may yet be found replenishing his supplies at the Spotted Cow.

Jacque Esquard and his crew are indeed at the Spotted Cow Inn, prematurely celebrating their escape from Greyhawk. As the PCs' barge docks among the many craft here, one of Lord Zoran's men spots the *hasty barge* docked on the far side of the wharf. Six of Jacque's crew are guarding the craft haphazardly, drinking and laughing loudly in the slowly gathering darkness.

What the player characters do is up to them. They can confront Jacque or they can try to take the barge and run. The Rhennee will let the PCs decide the best course of action.

If the PCs immediately try to steal the *hasty barge*, Jacque's guards suffer a -2 to their surprise rolls because they are tipsy. This will give the PCs an edge. If the PCs dally on the docks, however, a patrol of armed guards passes within four rounds. Now the PCs will have to devise a distraction, as the guards have a 75% chance of noticing the PCs near the *hasty barge* and sounding the alarm. The guards fight until more than half of them are slain, then the remainder escape to bring reinforcements. Reinforcements consist of four guards arriving every four rounds until a total of 32 guards have been called.

Jacque's Tippy Guards (4): AC 8; MV 12; HD 4 (F4); hp 20 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL LN

These guards are -1 on all attack, damage, and reaction rolls because of their condition.

Guards of the Spotted Cow (8): AC 5 (chain mail); MV 9; HD 2 (F2); hp 10 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL LN

These guards patrol the wharfs and grounds belonging to the owner of the Spotted Cow Inn. They do not accept bribes, and they are well paid for their services. Guard reinforcements use the same statistics.

The Wharf

There are 60 boats docked here, clearly showing the inn's popularity among the river folk.

Any trouble going on at the wharf has a 20% chance to be reported by wandering patrons. The inn's proprietor offers an "all you can drink" reward for anyone helping to prevent thefts and fights. There are at least two guards here at all times.

The Spotted Cow

The Spotted Cow Inn is the pride and joy of Ivan Lockswell. The establishment is prized by many river and bay travelers. Located just northwest of Hardby, the inn boasts a hearty crowd of 35 patrons this evening, many of which are regulars. The remainder of Jacque's crew, including Jacque himself, are inside the inn, resting and planning their return home in the morning. As the PCs enter the inn, one of Jacque's men alertly spots them and slips away unnoticed to warn his master.

When Jacque realizes that the jig is up, he sets the inn afire in an attempt to escape pursuit in the panic that will follow. Consult the map when referencing the following areas.

1. The Bar

This is the largest section of the inn, serving as a bar and dining room. Tonight the tables are packed with fishermen and merchants of the Wooly Bay. Several comely barmaids dash between tables, while a group of performers enchant the crowd with a cheery drinking tune. There appear to be no Rhennee in the place, except for any whom the player characters might have brought with them from their barge. Drinking to the good health of his patrons, Ivan easily can be picked out of the crowd.

2. The Kitchen

This room also serves as a storage area for the inn's many supplies, including several kegs of ale. Ivan's wife, Kika, and

his only daughter, Sara, constantly run between this room and the bar. A door at the north wall leads to the stables.

3. Stables

Resting in the stalls are nine horses belonging to various patrons. Tending to the horses is Ivan's youngest son, Ivan Junior. Two guards are always within earshot.

4. Entertainer's Room

A thick wool curtain separates this section from the main bar. A few musicians and some of Ivan's favorite dancing girls rehearse their acts in this quaintly-furnished room. When the PCs arrive, a father-and-son juggling team and Belinda the Belly Dancer are waiting here to perform.*

5. Boarding Rooms

This newly-added section of the inn has several boarding rooms, half of which are occupied. The room where Jacque and his men are staying is marked on the map with an "X." After Jacque starts the fire in the hallway between rooms, he and his men exit through his room's southern window. They flee to the *hasty barge*, and then to the waters of the Wooly Bay if they are able. See "The Fire," below.

The Fire

If the PCs have been spotted by one of Jacque's men, Jacque uses his last missile from his *necklace of missiles* (5-dice missile) to start the fire. After crawling through the window, Jacque screams "Fire!" to draw the attention of the eight-man guard patrol outside the nearby guardhouse, creating a panic. Use the statistics of the guards presented earlier.

The building's dry wood ignites quickly, catching the attention of everyone near the docks.

Jacque will reach the *hasty barge* six rounds after starting the fire. It will take him an additional two rounds to get the craft away from the docks and out on the river. Four rounds later, Jacque and his *hasty barge* are considered lost in the darkness.

The fire will take almost an hour to get under control. It will be up to the PCs whether they fight the blaze or attempt to stop the barge.

If the PCs have acted quickly enough to reach the *hasty barge* before it disappears in the night, Jacque orders



his men to fight to defend the craft. Jacques joins in the battle if necessary.

If the PCs are successful, and they return the *hasty barge* to Dmitri, the bargewright will be ecstatic. Lord Zoran secretly instructs Grotnek and his grunts to eliminate the PCs so there will be no witnesses who are not members of the Shriven Sickie.

Jacque Esquard AC 5 (*studded leather* +1); MV 12; HD 8 (F8); hp 42; THACO 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8 +1 (*scimitar* +1); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL LN

Jacque is of mixed Rhennee stock, 32 years old, 5' 9" tall, and 150 lbs. From the city of Fax on the Wild Coast, Jacque has searched for years for the *hasty barge*, which used to belong to his father. Jacque's father died at the hands of Lord Zoran, and he believes that keeping the *barge* from Zoran is only just.

Jacque's Followers (7): AC 6 (*studded leather*); MV 12; HD 4 (F4); hp 42; THACO 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL N

Grotnek and the Grunts

Grotnek strikes just when the PCs think they have completed their assignment

and can go home. However, Grotnek not only goes after the PCs, but also turns on Dmitri. Grotnek wants to claim all the credit for retrieving the barge.

If the PCs fought Grotnek's men before, assume that he gathered more from the ranks of the Sickie. Use the same statistics for Grotnek's grunts presented in an earlier encounter. Grotnek and his men attempt to strike with surprise, attacking any spell casters first. If any of Dmitri's crew is still alive, they quickly change loyalties and strike against the PCs and Dmitri, too, in an effort to save their skins.

If the PCs defeat Grotnek, his grunts, and Dmitri's men, they can take the *hasty barge* and return to Greyhawk. If it looks like the PCs are going to lose the fight, allow reasonable attempts to escape to succeed.

Conclusion

If the PCs come back to Greyhawk with the *hasty barge*, city officials take possession of it. After several hours of deliberation, the High Council of the Rhennee orders that, until this matter can be referred to the Rhennee in Fax on the Wild Coast, the *hasty barge* will be held by the Greyhawk Adventurers

Guild. That's the good news.

Weary from your ordeal, you reluctantly drag your feet back to the Greyhawk Adventurers Guild to report. Once in that all-too-familiar conference room, Zuaak calmly saunters over with a considerable grin on his homely kisser.

"Well, well, well," Zuaak chuckles. "It seems your cow pies finally did something right. You brought back da stolen barge, and it turns out to be the one and only *hasty barge* of the *Nyr Dyv*. I'm impressed! It's too bad, though, dat you guys don't get paid. Lord Zoran ain't around to cover the commission. Maybe you'll get a reward after possession of da *hasty barge* is decided by da Rhennee Councils of Greyhawk and Fax."

Pulling out one of those nauseating cigars, the beaming dwarf concludes, "And da way they argue, that reward should come through sometime in da next 30 years!" As Zuaak struts out the door, your hands rifle through your pockets in search of anything you can pawn for a meal.

Elminster's Everwinking Eye

Treasures of the Vast, Part Four

Ed Greenwood

More treasure? What're ye gonna do with it all, lad? Eat it? Build another castle? Well, that'll be nice. Make this one pink, will ye?

Gorstag of Highmoon said to
Theremen Ulath (Lord of Highmoon)
Year of the Sword

Our treasure tour of the Vast continues, from Orlimmin alphabetically onward. Tired of carrying all that loot yet? No? Hmmm . . .

Orlimmin

This village lies at the meeting-place of the Tantras Trail and the Long Reach, which runs from here to King's Reach (via Bambryn and Sendrin). It is a sleepy farming center, except when cattle are auctioned and the city is crammed with buyers and drovers.

A rough plateau rises south of Orlimmin; it is the reason the Long Reach trail doesn't go on to Mossbridges and stands like a rugged rolling wall to the south. It is also studded with gravel pits, where diggers from Orlimmin have always mined what they need (or can sell for use in the nearby cities). These pits are said to hide several treasures—as well as the bodies of thieves from Tantras and Ravens Bluff who double-crossed colleagues once too often.

The pits are also rumored to conceal the remains of an early high priest of Waukeen—buried upright as was the custom at the time, standing on a pile of gold bars and wearing cloth-of-gold vestments and a ring displaying a different gem on each finger. The total value of this burial would be 60,000 gp or more—and since the collapse of Waukeen's worship, more than one local has become interested in looking for the remains of the departed clergyman. Unfortunately, any marker that may once have identified the grave is long gone, probably because the graveposts of such exalted clergy of Waukeen were adorned with gold inlay and gems in those early days.

Six winters ago, an adventuring band (The Cabal of the Crown, based in

Procampur) came to Orlimmin to investigate the gravel pits. A few soon fled, and the rest were found slain in one of the pits, after a night in which *fireballs*, *lightning bolts*, and similar spells were seen to erupt from the pit. (Some locals even came out of a tavern to watch, drinks in hand.)

The story spread that they'd uncovered a vampire and paid the price—but no undead was seen, and vampires seldom use spells outdoors at night that flash and explode noisily so they can be seen from afar . . . or behead the bodies of victims, or fail to drain anything from them. Either something guards the gravel pits, or rival adventurers attacked the Cabal. Locals claim to know nothing, but any visitors who reveal that they're interested in the gravel pits or treasure will be asked to pay for their rooms (and any services or goods ordered) in advance.

River Vesper

This large and generally placid river runs down out of The High Country to reach the sea at Calaunt. Its broad, gently-sloping river valley is verdant farmland, and offers an off-road route through the Vast for thieves, orc bands, and others who don't want to be seen on the roads—but don't want to get lost, either.

There is one intriguing mobile treasure associated with the Vesper, however. It is only been seen in the past two decades, and its cause is unknown. A circle of dancing, slowly rotating *ioun stones* are seen moving here and there above the waves, anywhere up or down the river valley. The circle contains about a dozen stones and moves slowly along the river by itself, floating about six feet above the water, glowing and twinkling like a ring of moving fire-flies.

The ring seems to avoid attempts to grab stones from it, but so far no adventurer with a net, magic, the ability to fly, or other means of snaring a stone has met with the magical ring. A tale going around the nearby taverns says that anyone who takes a stone from the ring gets to keep it, but gets a *geas* along with it—and that a different quest is linked to each stone.

Sarbreenar

In olden days, the city of Sarbreen stood where Ravens Bluff now flourishes; Sarbreenar was its guardian outpost, protecting access to Elvenblood Pass so that Sarbreen never could be attacked by surprise through the mountains, or be isolated from Procampur when winter ice and storms made sailing treacherous.

In those days, Sarbreenar was little more than a keep attached to a terraced garden and high pastures. Today, it is a small village, all trace of the keep swept away. It was torn apart by a huge dragon, remembered as "the Sarbreenar Wyrms," which decided to roost there and prey on the road traffic whenever it was hungry.

The Wyrms was a green dragon of the largest size; its tail hung down the shattered tower to the ground below as it slept, and men dared not approach; the road fell into disuse. Lack of food proved the Wyrms's undoing in the end. When it grew hungry, it flew south to raid Procampur, tearing the roofs from houses and devouring all inside.

After the second such raid, the angry and fearful folk of Procampur hired a wizard, whose spells awaited the Wyrms on its third raid. The wizard brought the dragon crashing down into the harbor of Procampur in a rain of blood and bones—cut apart in midair by exploding "swordballs" that flung the rusty fragments of old weapons in all directions (as a *fireball* hurls forth flames). So the Wyrms perished, and men crept slowly back to Sarbreenar, to rebuild.

They found orcs had come down to strip the place in their absence. After a bloody, week-long fight through the mountains, Sarbreenar and the Pass it guarded returned to human hands, but without any of the goods it had once housed. The orcs had taken or despoiled everything—including the meager treasure accumulated by the Wyrms, which is still presumably hidden up in the mountains somewhere nearby.

Sendrin

This crossroads village stands where the Long Reach trail (linking Orlimmin

and King's Reach) crosses Blaern's Trail (which links Calaunt with The North Road at Dead Tree Hollow.) Known today primarily as a place of basketweavers, cattle-ranchers, and furniture-makers, Sendrin boasts a surprising number of large and important-looking stone houses and shops. They were built when Sendrin was a town of magic, long ago.

Of old, when human rule had just come to the Vast, a temple to Savras the All-Seeing was established at Sendrin. In those days, Savras was seen more as an all-wise user of magic than as a seer, and wizards came to remote Sendrin to acquire new spells, practice spells far from built-up areas, and meet with other mages. It became a place of pilgrimage, where mages could play in a manner their importance "at home" could never let them do, carousing through the night and using magic to do rude and destructive things.

When Savras fell to the spells of Azuth, all this ended. Sendrin dwindled to just a farming village as the wizards left and all the healers, scribes, wizards' tailors and wizards' escorts and spell-component-sellers moved away. The traveling Magefair held annually in various remote locales around the Realms (for a rare glimpse of Elminster at play, see the story "Elminster At The Magefair" in the Realms of Valor anthology) resulted from the fall of Sendrin. Not only are there many rumors of various spellbooks and magical items buried or hidden in the vicinity (a dead wizard was even found walled up in a sealed secret passage in the walls of one Sendrin house, entombed with his staff, rings, and spellbooks), but there is one surviving relic of the destroyed temple of Savras.

Nothing remains of the temple except a crater of fused and blackened stone rubble, its edges overgrown with saplings, in the backyard of the largest inn in Sendrin, The Blasted Wizard (one must know the history of the place to truly understand the name). In this hollow sits a stone idol of Savras, in the shape of a disembodied human male head as tall as a man. The head rises into the air whenever a living being enters the crater, and floats about four feet off the ground by means of magical levitation, flying about at will at MV Fl 12 (D). It speaks with a deep, booming voice when addressed, answering magical queries—but sages have noted its cryptic wisdom seems to be a large and sophisticated set of "stock phrases."

It does have the ability to enact magic by touch on beings brought into the crater, and it does so automatically, sensing and correcting conditions regardless of the wishes of the beings who encounter it. The head can do the following things once each per day: *neutralize poison* (renders all poison present truly inert and harmless, not just curing a poisoned being), *cure disease* (including lycanthropy), and *dispel magic* (on all spells or magical conditions governing a being, including protective spells, *geas* magics, *quest* spells, *feble-mindedness*, and many spell-like psionic attacks and controls.

The Mouth of Savras (as the head is called) can't be removed from the crater or magically controlled or harmed in any way, and it will avoid combat. Attempts to destroy or move it simply return it to the bottom of the crater, where it sighs wearily, closes its eyes, and settles down again—until again attacked, or a new set of intruders enters the crater.

Swords Pool

Located in a wooded dell on The North Road between King's Reach and Dead Tree Hollow, this waystop village is notable for its good inn. The Nine Swords inn stands on the west side of the road, between it and the deep, dark pool for which the village is named.

The inn's name comes from the only local treasure tale: a resident wizard, in the early days of the Vast, cast a spell to preserve and protect the magical swords accumulated by his adventuring companions. The spell outlasted its caster and the sword-owners, and it confounds adventurers to this day.

If the right words are spoken, nine magical blades will rise in unison from the pool, dripping, and hang vertically in a ring a dozen feet above the water, hilts uppermost.

If a blade is then touched by a living being (a dozen feet above water that is 50 feet or more deep, and a good 40 feet from shore), it will be released from the magic, and will fall (or can be freely carried away). The other blades will remain hanging until touched in their turn.

Blades governed by this spell don't rust, and can't be found by dragging the Pool or casting *dispel magics*; they "aren't there" until the words are spoken. Speaking the words a second time makes the remaining blades sink down again, into concealment. What

sorts of magical blades are included in the nine is not recorded.

Swords Pool has been stocked with trout and the tiny, sharp-tasting fish known as "manyfins" by the owners of the inn; illicit fishing is not encouraged, but does occur on dark nights.

Tavilar

This village stands at the southern edge of the duskwoods that mark the southern edge of The Flooded Forest, and the lands claimed by the Mage Who Never Dies (the demilich who is master of the ruin known as The Mage's Tower). Elminster warns adventurers not to try to seize the magic he commands: the lichnee has prepared trap-spells that divert intruders into dangerous locales on other planes.

Tavilar was once home to a merry adventuring band of pranksome, always-jesting female thieves and bards, The Turning Key. The ladies of the Key met with disaster while adventuring on a far plane, and the few who survived retired to Waterdeep, Neverwinter, and Berdusk, never returning to Tavilar to the rambling old house where they'd been so happy together.

The House of the Key, old and in need of constant repair when they'd inhabited it, soon collapsed. Adventurers have picked through its wreckage many times, but found only ruined garments and furniture, never treasure. Local lore insists that The Turning Key were a rich band indeed, and that a lot of treasure must lie somewhere nearby. None of the ladies is still alive today, but the elderly bard Satcheera "Silvereyes" Moonfist once said in Berdusk, "Still haven't found our jewels? They must be looking in far too dry a place!"

This has been generally interpreted to mean that the treasure of The Turning Key lies somewhere underwater in the bogs of The Flooded Forest—but just where, in all those miles of dangerous desolation, none can say. "Near Tavilar" is a term that covers a lot of swamp!

Our treasure tour of the Vast concludes next time.

Arabian Wonders

Magical Items for the AL-QADIM® Setting

Gregory W. Detwiler

Potions:

Potion of Begging

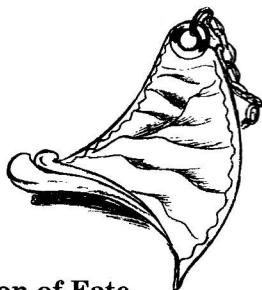
When ingested, this potion imparts to the drinker's voice a pitiable tone so imploring that any listener must save vs spells or be compelled to grant the beggar what she craves, assuming the beggar asks for nothing extraordinary (for a beggar). Ordinary requests are for small amounts of money or food, or even shelter. The duration of the potion's effect is one hour, in which time a quick beggar can gain enough to support herself in the style of a modest merchant for a day. A PC on the receiving end of a potion-modified voice will hand over money if he fails his saving throw, but he may soon wonder what possessed him to give to the beggar if he is not normally of a charitable nature. Magic users create these potions as payment for beggar-thieves whom they regularly employ as spies.

XP Value: 250

Bag of Flaming Stones

This magical bag is made of the enchanted gullet of an elephant bird (see the AL-QADIM Monstrous Compendium). If three stones—its capacity—are placed inside the bag, then they will be super-heated one round later. When slung or hurled in battle, they inflict 2d6 points of damage. Oddly, their heat does not harm their owner nor the sling she wields (assuming she uses one). Note that the wielder is protected only against the heat of the stone, but not that of other objects.

XP Value: 2,000



Beacon of Fate

This magical brooch is carved with the image of shifting dunes of white sand. If properly "tuned" to its wearer, it will allow him to call successfully upon Fate once, and once only, as per the rules in the Arabian Adventures book. As with the usual method, calling upon Fate with the beacon will not provide an easy, automatic rescue, but only the means to get out of a hopeless situation.

To attune the beacon to himself, the owner must suffer severe misfortune, since Fate is even-handed. The most common means of attunement is for the character to wear the beacon in battle, during which time he will suffer a -3 penalty "to hit" and damage, on armor class, and on saving throws. The battle in question must be one in which the owner of the beacon faces a roughly equal opponent; the threat must be real.

During the battle, the PC with the beacon may cooperate with other members of his party, but he is not likely to contribute much to the fight with his severe penalties. While the fight lasts, a magical aura will play about him, clearly indicating to any intelligent foe that he is vulnerable. Even if his enemy is a dumb animal, he will smell of fear and weakness, giving the animal the impression he is sorely wounded and an easy kill.

At the DM's option, the beacon may be used repeatedly, with each "charge" being "earned" by an unlucky battle. Fully 10% of these beacons are cursed items that cannot be removed and which always provide their bearer with the bad luck that would otherwise occur only in one battle.

XP Value: 2,000

Figurines of Wondrous Power

All of these figurines are worth as much experience as those listed in the Dungeon Master Guide (100 xp per Hit Die of the figure) and function in the same manner.

Agate Buraq

When first encountered, this figurine is an exquisitely carved statue of eye agate no larger than one's thumbnail. When activated, it becomes a buraq—but one with certain limitations upon its actions. It will never take part in combat; its sole reason for being is to provide its owner a quick getaway. It cannot use the buraq's time stop power. Any attempt to remove feathers from its tail in buraq form will destroy the creature as thoroughly as smashing it in figurine form (and any removed feathers will be useless). It moves as a buraq and may be used for up to eight hours each week.

Amber Camel

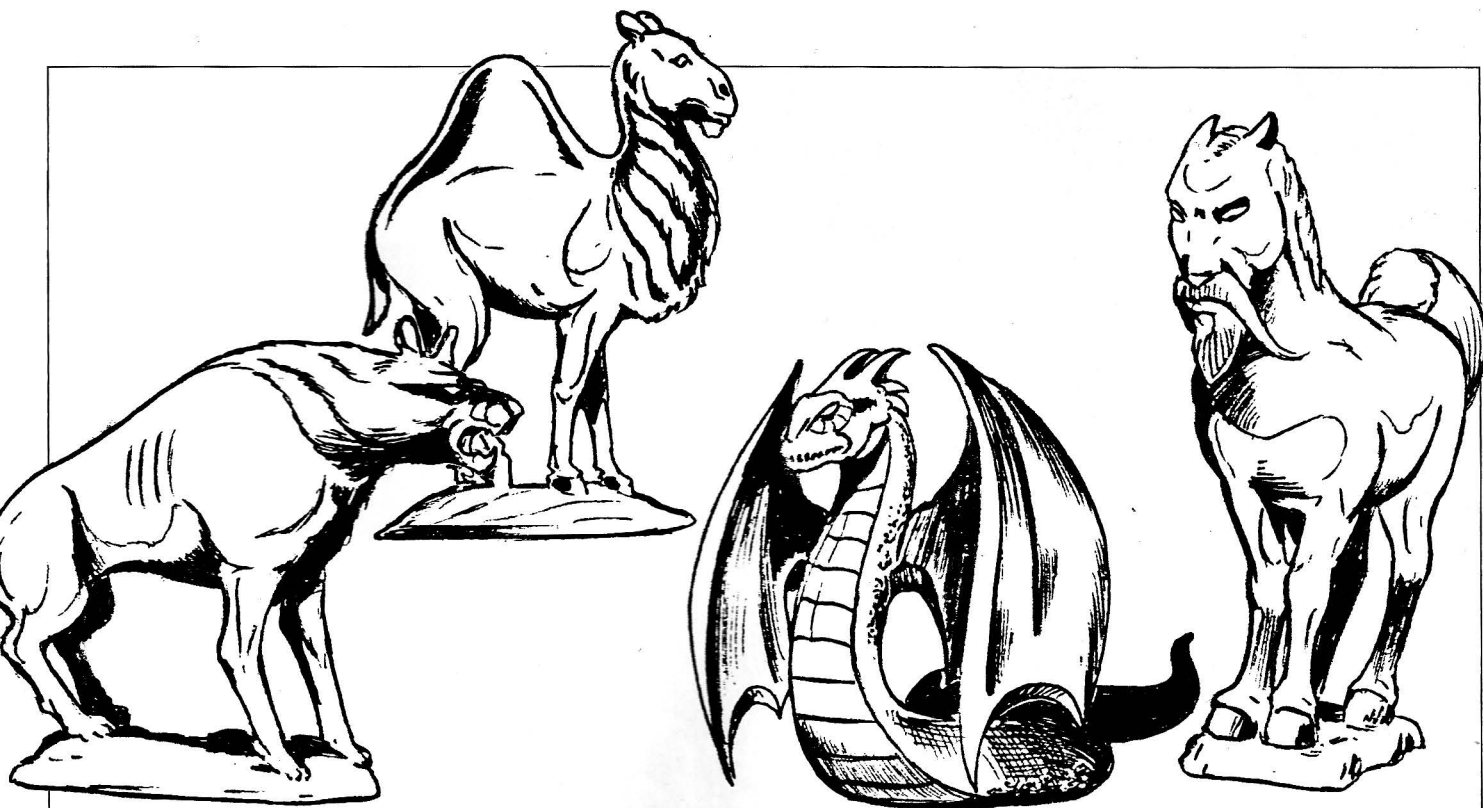
The camel will be either a desert, mountain, racing, or war camel (roll 1d4 to determine type). The figurine becomes a camel of the appropriate type upon speaking the command word, and it will have all of the movement, combat, and other properties of its type. The amber camel may be used for one week every month.

Emerald Winged Serpent

This figurine becomes a winged serpent as described in the AL-QADIM Monstrous Compendium. It has all the powers and weaknesses of a true winged serpent but can be called upon only once each week for no longer than an hour.

Jasper Hyena

This figurine becomes a full-grown hyena when activated, fighting its owner's enemies with no thought to its own safety. Some (20%) of these figurines are actually giant hyenas (see the Monstrous Compendium for stats on both). Either hyena type may be used for a maximum of twice a week, up to eight hours each time.



Jet Wasp

This figurine becomes a giant mason wasp (MC13) when activated. It may be used twice a week, 12 hours. It may carry a single rider, but it is mainly used to fight its owner's enemies, as it is equipped with the same poison and fire breath as its natural counterpart. It is also immune to fire-based attacks.

Gem of Genie Delight

This exquisitely crafted gemstone will always be of the most expensive varieties: diamond, ruby, emerald, sapphire, etc. it gives off an eerie aura to any human, humanoid, or demihuman who beholds it, for it was not meant for the ins (mortals) at all. Rather, the wizards who create these gems use designs and magics meant to please genies of any kind. Needless to say, these gems are often sought out by sha'irs.

Any genie who sees a gem of this sort will want it for his own. While he will not be charmed by the gem, the owner will have a powerful bargaining tool with which to negotiate services. Besides its beauty, it is worth 10,000 gp, so it is quite suitable as a bribe for any one service to be performed by a genie. It may be used as payment in lieu of performing any

other services (such as a mission) for the genie in return for a single act. For instance, it can be used to pay the jann for services rendered previously, but any future services will still require payment. When using the gem to bribe a genie for a single service, it provides a +6 bonus to the reaction check. By itself, however, the gem will not be enough persuasion when the sha'ir wishes to bind a genie to his service.

XP Value: 2,500



Gen Crystal

This is a perfectly round crystal, not unlike a crystal ball in appearance, though it has far different powers. It is more like a ring of spell storing than anything else, but it operates quite

differently. Only a sha'ir may use this item, and then only if she has properly prepared it in advance.

When a sha'ir who owns this crystal sends her gen after a spell of any sort and the gen successfully finds it, she has the option of storing it in the gen crystal rather than casting it immediately. Any time after, she may cast the spell as a normal wizard would, so long as she has the crystal handy. Once the spell has been cast, however, it is gone for good. The gen crystal can hold up to 20 spell levels, but each spell level cast with the gem permanently reduces its capacity. Thus, if the sha'ir captures a magic missile once, then casts it, the crystal can store and cast only 19 more spell levels.

The DM should note that the only spells which may be put in the gen crystal are those which the sha'ir's own gen can find and which the sha'ir chooses not to use immediately. The gen's task has the same degree of difficulty as always, including the problems of failure feeding on failure in the search for a particular spell and the peril of searching for priest spells.

XP Value: 3,500

Instrument of Legends

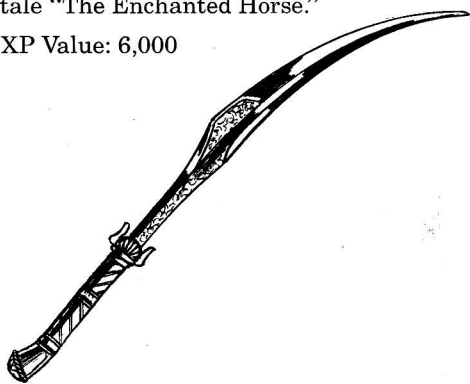
This is a musical instrument (of any type) with a special enchantment, usable only by rawuns. Whenever a rawun relates a ballad or sings a song while playing the instrument, the "memory" of the ballad or song is placed within it. From then on, any time any rawun uses the instrument, he will magically know all the lore that has been sung while playing the instrument. If he does not take the time to memorize the lore, then the rawun will "know" it only while playing the instrument. Magical items of this sort from lost civilizations are especially prized, since they hold such rich stores of legends from the past.

XP Value: 500

Wooden Horse

This is yet another magical item which enables its owner to fly. In appearance, it is a life-sized, realistically carved wooden horse with no wings or other obvious means of flight. It does, however, have two pegs, one under each ear. Twisting one peg controls altitude; twisting the other controls speed (movement class C). Up to two human-sized riders can be carried by the horse. It has a flying speed of 40", but will not walk on the ground. Only magic (including magical weapons) can destroy it; it has 50 hps. Note: This object is inspired by the Arabian Nights tale "The Enchanted Horse."

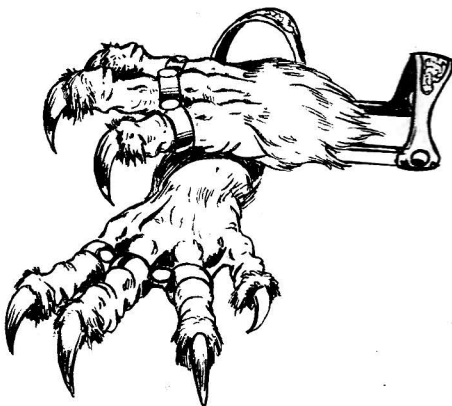
XP Value: 6,000



Weapon of Prowess

Any type of weapon may be included in this category, costing as much (if available) as a +1 weapon of its type. the PC who owns a weapon of prowess will, while wielding it, be able to put on a show of bogus skill as though she possessed the skill display weapons prowess. Note that this will do the owner no good in an actual fight;

moreover, many mage advisors to rulers are aware of these weapons and may decide to test the PC's prowess by giving him a different weapon to handle. There is no "to hit" nor damage bonus for this weapon, and it cannot harm those creatures struck only by magical weapons.



Bagh Nakh of Punishment

This enchanted weapon is a set of tiger's claws (bagh nakh) actually made from the claws of an ammut (MC13). They are +1 to hit and damage normally, but +3 to hit and damage evil creatures. The weapons act as a *sword of life stealing* against evil opponents.

There are a few drawbacks to using this weapon. First, any time an evil character is slain by them, the bagh nakh loose a loud roar, just as ammut themselves do. This roar may well be counter-productive if the wielder of the bagh nakh desires stealth. More importantly, the roar attracts any ammut in the immediate area (within one mile). The attracted ammut will certainly investigate the sound, and when they see its source they will savagely attack the wielder of the weapons, their morale rising from elite to fearless. Finally, the bagh nakh and their wielder will stink with an oily, decaying stench for one day for each evil character the weapons kill. For this reason, those who use bagh nakhs of punishment have little to recommend them to polite society.

XP Value: 500



Apple of Curing

This is a fragrant artificial apple, made of what appears to be a form of bright red wax. Once per day, anyone who smells the apple will be cured of any disease, healed of all wounds, and be purged of any poison. The apple was created by supernatural beings, probably genies. When it appeared in the Arabian Nights tale "Prince Ahmed and the Periebanou," however, it was the work of fairy folk. Incidentally, this is the same tale which introduced the famed flying carpet.

The owner of the apple will not be parted from it, and each time he uses the apple there is a 10% cumulative chance that his alignment will shift toward chaotic good (the apple's alignment). If the owner is already chaotic good, he may use the apple's curing powers twice a day.

Ultimately, however, the owner of the apple will become aloof and deem himself too good for human society. Each time the apple has appeared, the last anyone saw of its owner was on board a ship he had chartered, from which he presently wound up missing in mid-ocean. Due to this legend and the apple's alignment, it is presumed that the owner joined the marids, reinforcing the suspicions that the apple was created by genies (though no marid has ever admitted as much). It is said that to destroy the apple, one must feed it to the largest zaratan (gargantuan turtle, MC 13) in the ocean, that it may be crushed on its mighty beak.

XP Value: 60,000

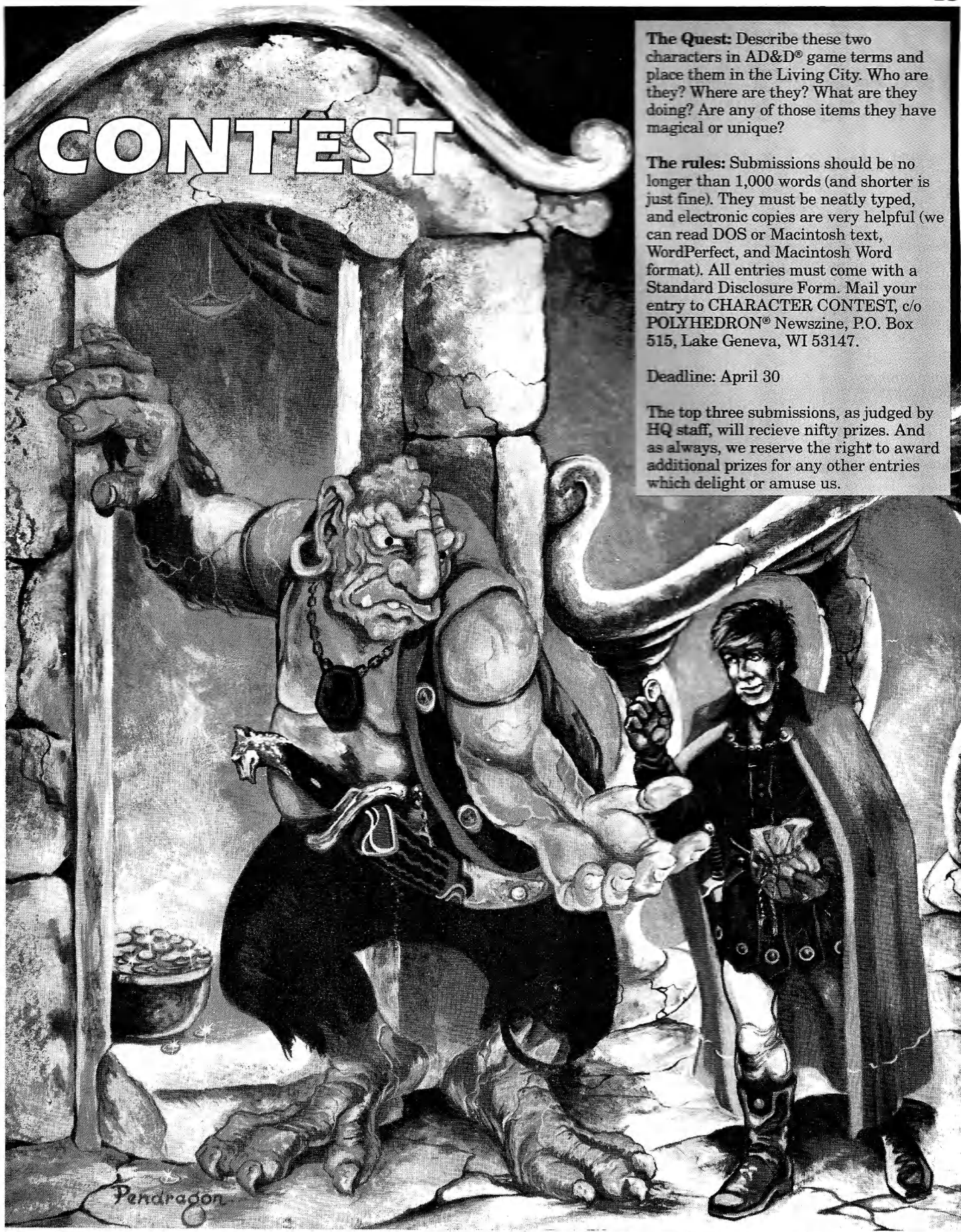
CONTEST

The Quest: Describe these two characters in AD&D® game terms and place them in the Living City. Who are they? Where are they? What are they doing? Are any of those items they have magical or unique?

The rules: Submissions should be no longer than 1,000 words (and shorter is just fine). They must be neatly typed, and electronic copies are very helpful (we can read DOS or Macintosh text, WordPerfect, and Macintosh Word format). All entries must come with a Standard Disclosure Form. Mail your entry to CHARACTER CONTEST, c/o POLYHEDRON® Newszine, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Deadline: April 30

The top three submissions, as judged by HQ staff, will receive nifty prizes. And as always, we reserve the right to award additional prizes for any other entries which delight or amuse us.



P O L Y H E D R O N

Into The Dark

Pinocchio's Children

by James Lowder

You can't get any better *****
Entertaining and enjoyable *****
There are worse films ****
Wait for cable ***
A waste of good tape **
*

Pinocchio

1940, 88 Minutes

Disney

Director: Ben Sharpsteen & Hamilton Luske

For his second animated feature, Walt Disney chose to adapt Carlo Collodi's famous 1882 novel, *Pinocchio*. The plot should be familiar to most of you—carved by a lonely old man named Geppetto, Pinocchio is a rebellious puppet who learns through his adventures how to be brave, truthful, and unselfish, thus earning life.

The Disney *Pinocchio* is a really stunning work of animation. Books could be written on the amazing use of sound in the underwater sequences alone. In the opening moments, we're pulled into the film by some great point-of-view shots. As Jiminy Cricket hops into town, we hop right along with him, and when Cleo the cat peers through a fishbowl, we share his grotesquely warped vision of Pinocchio. The film also features two of the most dramatic, most frightening scenes in animation: Lampwick's transformation into a donkey on Pleasure Island and the flight from the whale Monstro.

Unfortunately, the sanitized, preachy story never really lives up to the film's technical brilliance. The characters are saccharine, the story disjointed and episodic. As for the villains, the brutal presence of showman Stromboli breaks the film's overall light tone, and roguish J. Worthington Foulfellow (the fox) adds little more than a silly interlude.

Pinocchio's episodic plot was derived directly from the novel, but the similarities between the book and the film end there. Collodi's Pinocchio is something of a berserker, the sort of puppet Beavis and Butt-head would love. He falls asleep near a brazier of hot coals and burns his feet off. And

when a talking cricket chastises him for being so unruly, Pinocchio squashes him flat with a mallet! The novel, by the by, was one of my favorites as a kid. I'll leave you to make of that what you will.

Silent Night, Deadly Night 5:

The Toy Maker

1991, 90 Minutes

Live

Director: Martin Kitrosser

Cast: Mickey Rooney, William Thorne, Brian Bremer

*

Someone is terrorizing little Derek. On Christmas Eve he receives a package from an unknown malefactor, and the Santa toy inside kills his father. Derek clams up, refusing to tell just what strangled his dad.

So who's after the kid? On paper, the best suspect seems to be Noah, an ex-military guy who's buying toys and tearing them apart. But anyone who's seen *Terminator* will recognize Tracy Fraim's Noah as a weak clone of Michael Biehn's character from that superior flick.

No, the only ones who could be the baddies in this strange film are drunken toyshop owner Joe Petto (Mickey Rooney) and his odd son Pino (Brian Bremer). With those silly names, you can guess why Pino acts so strangely and what the pair have against a real little boy like Derek.

The big special effects scene features the demise of a lustful babysitter and her boyfriend at the hands of a veritable horde of toys—rubber snakes, mechanical army men, a disembodied hand, and the like. The editing and effects are the sort of amateur-hour stuff that makes Full Moon's *Demonic Toys* look like *Terminator 2*.

The cast is better than those in most low-budget horror flicks, but the characters are all derivative. Even Bremer's engaging depiction of Pino is nothing more than an adept copy of Johnny Depp as Edward Scissorhands.

Silent Night, Deadly Night 5 has nothing to do with the previous four entries in the series, but it does feature one of the most revolting final confrontations I've ever seen, as the sexless, doll-bodied Pino tries to molest

Derek's mom. Real twist-o stuff, and all very much likely to disgust those of you with any taste at all.

Puppetmaster

1989, 90 Minutes

Full Moon/Paramount

Director: David Schmoeller

Cast: Paul LeMat, Robin Frates, Jimmie Scaggs, Irene Miracle

**

Four mismatched parapsychologists are summoned to the Bodega Bay Inn by Neil, their slimy compatriot. But when they arrive, they find that Neil is dead—a surprise to them since they all share a mind link. They stay for the funeral and, of course, creepy things start happening.

With the help of Neil's pretty but vapid widow (Robin Frates), prescient Yale professor Alex Whitaker (Paul LeMat) searches out the source of the nefarious doings. It's all tied to some strange goings-on that occurred in the film's prologue, wherein puppetmaker Andre Toulon (William Hickey) hides his magical puppets before being gunned down by typical square-jawed Nazis. Now the puppets are on the loose again—and without kind-hearted Toulon to guide them, they're none too sociable.

The special effects in *Puppetmaster* are noteworthy, and the *modus operandi* of each of the dolls is well-defined and interesting. The human characters aren't nearly as intriguing, with the sole exception of Irene Miracle as the quirky "White Witch."

And while *Puppetmaster* benefits from some solid camerawork and clever story quirks, the film's plodding pace kills any tension or excitement. Repetitious doll's point-of-view shots abound, as do endless sequences of people strolling through the hotel's hallways. All this uninspired filler gives the film a droning quality that will almost certainly bore you into a stupor.

The credits list the writer as Joseph G. Collodi. Considering the author of *Pinocchio*, this is either an amusing coincidence or a self-important pseudonym for the author of this lackluster puppet tale.

Jenette LeFleur

A Troubled Rose In Ravens Bluff



by Rick Mangekian

The following is a character the author has played for more than three years in Living City events throughout the United States. Jenette, who started as a first-level character, has grown in abilities and stature during the years. The POLYHEDRON® Newzine welcomes submissions of Living City characters.

Jenette LeFleur

7th Level Female Human Enchantress

STR: 8
INT: 18
WIS: 14
DEX: 9
CON: 9
CHA: 18
COM: 19
AC: 2

Hit Points: 18

Alignment: Chaotic Good

Languages: Common, Elvish

Age: 20

Hair/Eyes: Black/Green

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 108 lbs.

Weapon Proficiencies: Sling, staff

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Read/write Common (19), read/write Elvish (19), religion (14), herbalism (16), etiquette (18), poetry (14), singing (19), crowd working (19), acting (14), disguise (18)

Spells/day: 5 4 3 2

One spell at each level must be a spell from the school of Enchantment/Charm. Jenette cannot cast Invocation/Evocation nor Necromantic spells.

Spells frequently memorized: First Level—*Charm person, friends, hypnotism, sleep, audible glamor*; Second Level—*Forget, blur, invisibility,*

detect evil; Third Level—*Hold person, suggestion, clairaudience*; Fourth Level—*Emotion, Evard's black tentacles*
Magic Items: *Ring of water breathing, ring of protection +2, scroll of protection from lycanthropes, scroll with wizard eye at 9th level, five sling bullets of impact +1, bracers of defense AC 4, bag of holding, necklace of memory enhancement, Skie's locks and bolts, portable canoe, staff +2, two potions of extra healing*

Jenette is a lovely young enchantress who started making a name for herself in Ravens Bluff three years ago—shortly after she entered the city gates. She is known about the city as a singer and an adventurer, and she is recognized as one of Sune's most devoted followers. Jenette is thoughtful and compassionate—more compassionate perhaps than others who follow Sune.

When she travels about the Living City, she is usually seen in a finely-detailed crimson gown. Her hair is always adorned with flowers, and she is usually followed by admirers.

Jenette is best known for her striking beauty, and nearly all those who see her stop and stare. She has a delicate build and a pale but perfect complexion. Her hair is long and black, flowing over her shoulders and half way down her back. Her eyes are a luminescent emerald green, and they seem to sparkle with mischief when she smiles. Her voice is soft and pleasant. However, she raises it strongly when singing, especially when she is honoring Sune in song.

In spite of her physical beauty and impressive abilities, Jenette is quite modest. If complimented on her appearance, she says that it is a gift from Sune and that she just does her best to display the goddess' blessings properly.

Jenette attracts no small amount of attention from the young men of Ravens Bluff, but none have captured her heart. She is gentle with those she refuses, turning them down with such grace that some say it is better to be rejected by Jenette than to be accepted by any of the noble ladies of the Living City. (Of course, this is not said within earshot of those noble ladies.) She has developed a bit of a reputation as a matchmaker due to her efforts to find more willing companions for her unsuccessful suitors.

Jenette started her career as an adventurer a little more than three years ago. Disguised as a boy, she joined the Ravens Bluff Nightwatch. She was not very convincing in the role, and before long she revealed herself to be a beautiful young woman. Some say she is more an ornament than an asset, but adventuring parties which have accepted her into their ranks have been quite successful and attest to her many skills. It is hard to say whether this is due to her choice of company or to her array of spells.

When she is not adventuring in the wilds around the city, Jenette enjoys shopping, socializing, and visiting friends. By her side she always has a sheaf of parchment on which she writes ideas for poems and songs. She also jots down the names of any eligible young ladies she meets, as these are possible matches for her male friends.

She often can be found in the late afternoon in a feast hall or tavern, behind piles of books and parchments scattered about a table. There she will

be pondering a rhyme, counting the meter of a verse, or planning an accidental meeting for two people she thinks really should know each other better.

In the evening, Jenette earns her keep singing in the city's inns. Her repertoire includes love songs, especially those about lost lovers who are reunited. She dislikes long, sad ballads, but she will sing any song with a good melody and a well-written verse. She knows how to play to an audience, flirting with them, teasing them, and then bringing them back down to earth by the end of the evening.

Jenette would like to become more established in Ravens Bluff. She has joined with Felina Fireheart, a beautiful red-haired bard, and the two of them are saving their gold to open a place of their own. They intend to call it Firehair and Friends. There are a few buildings up for sale they have been considering, but so far the cost is out of reach. Still, the women are confident their dream will come true and that Firehair and Friends will be a place of stories, poetry, and music. Jenette also plans to have a small shrine to Sune in the establishment.

Jenette enjoys life in Ravens Bluff, and she believes she can accomplish much good by adventuring in and near the city. She likes the people of the city and considers many of them her close friends. She has sworn to Sune that she is willing to do whatever she can to help preserve and protect the citizens.

There is another side to Jenette, one she keeps hidden from even her closest friends. Jenette is actually Jean, son of a priestess of Sune and a half-elven bard. A powerful spell placed on him by an offended avatar changed his appearance and his destiny.

Jean was born in the mountains east of Ravens Bluff. His mother was assigned there by her temple to tend their secret herb gardens. Her contact with her temple was Kalaine, an enchantress who visited once a month.

After six years in the mountains, Jean's mother was called back to her temple in Selgaunt. Only women were allowed to live on the grounds of the temple. She could not bear living apart from Jean, so she dressed the child in girl's clothing and presented him to her superiors as Jenette, an orphan hoping to become an initiate in the priesthood. He was accepted into the temple as a girl, and his mother was assigned to be his mentor.

She kept a close eye on him and was able to maintain the deception for more than seven years, happy to have her son by her side.

All went reasonably well for Jean and his mother until the night before a ceremony that would initiate him into the ranks of the temple priestesses. An avatar of Sune appeared before all the temple priestesses and told them that the deception of the LeFleurs was an affront to her and that they must be punished. The avatar bound Jean's mother to the temple and banished the boy from her sight. The avatar swore that the woman would not see her son again and could not leave the temple grounds until she had done sufficient penance in the eyes of Sune.

The avatar then turned to Jean, who was trembling in fear. The avatar touched him and said, "Since you played the female child so well, a fine young maid you'll be. Only will you know that in your heart you are male. But good deeds done in my name out in the world of men may show that you are not to blame, then I will come again."

With that Sune's avatar faded from sight, and Jean was left in the body of a beautiful young woman.

Banished from his mother's side, Jean found his way to Kalaine, the enchantress. Kalaine, not realizing the beautiful young girl was her friend's son, took Jean in as an apprentice. She found the youth to be a quick study and eager to please.

After three years of study, Jean left to answer Sune's charge.

After his first few months adventuring as a woman, Jean adopted the name Jenette LeFleur. Jenette now travels about Ravens Bluff and the Vast, doing good works and searching for some way to redeem herself in Sune's eyes.



The Living Galaxy

Stretch Your Mental Muscles With "Times Three"

by Roger E. Moore

Enough of big themes for a time. Let's try something short and offbeat. We'll design an adventure-creation system, and we'll make it useful for everyone with a need for quick adventures in a science fiction campaign.

In this column in *POLYHEDRON* issue #83, I mentioned the "fill in the blanks" trick for better game-mastering. In it, you take several unrelated items and find ways to associate them to generate the framework of an adventure. It's a superb way to exercise your imagination and challenge your intelligence.

Let's make that trick a little more specific, and we'll call it the "times three" exercise. First, pick out a well-detailed world, country, or city in your campaign where you need an adventure or two. We'll assume the player characters are already here and in need of excitement next Friday night when their players show up at your place for gaming—but you can't think of anything to offer them.

Now comes the fun part: Pick out three completely unrelated things that will appear in your adventure. It makes no difference how you come up with these things; we'll discuss sources in a minute. You need the following:

1. A person, creature, or being;
2. A thing—maybe a device, a treasure, a vehicle, etc.; and,
3. One more being or thing (it makes no difference which you pick).

Make these items specific and catchy, going for interesting things even if you have to doctor up the item a bit in your imagination. For example, you might look around your bedroom right now and jot down the following: 1) a poster; 2) yourself; and, 3) your bed. That admittedly looks pretty bland. It's better to jot down some things that are sort of like those items, but fleshed out more.

Two minutes later, you might have the following in your list: 1) a framed photograph of a famous musician, dead now over a century (you have Axel Rose on your wall, but you're using creative license here); 2) a second-year college

student struggling with a term paper in mathematics (assuming that's pretty much your situation); and, 3) an Army cot, the sort that folds up, only this one is a high-tech version with a built-in heater and stereo FM radio (more creative license).

Now for the *really* fun part: Use all three items to create the basic plot of a one-night adventure. Anyone can do it, and here's how—but first, two important points.

Those Important Points

We're putting two necessary strictures on our adventure-creating project:

One: By the very nature of this exercise, whatever three items you pick must relate directly to the adventure. They cannot be window-dressing, items that merely set a mood or setting. Their presence must make a difference. As a result, you must make each item that you pick a focal point in the story your adventure will tell.

Two: Whatever adventure you create must relate directly to the dominant themes of the game you play. FASA's *BattleTech* game revolves around combat between giant manlike robots across the galaxy; TSR's *BUGHUNTERS*™ system has human clone warriors battling for survival against hideous alien monstrosities; BTRC's *TimeLords* game involves time travel; West End Games' *Star Wars: The RPG* has the Force, the evil Empire, the good Rebels, and so forth. The resulting adventure must fit in with the cosmos your game depicts, in both substance and theme.

Now that we've said that, let's start things rolling.

Infinite Diversity . . .

The key point to this exercise is to cultivate the way in which you look at things. How many different ways could an item be used in an adventure story? You want to place the items you've picked into interesting roles that serve to draw the players into the adventure, so you have to look at each thing in many ways.

The college student, for instance, could be a friendly ally, a hostile foe, a traitorous informant, a kidnap victim, a thief, or a part-time campus patrol officer who might either arrest or assist the adventurers in their mission (whatever you decide their mission to be). Will the student be the object of the adventure (the item that must be found or dealt with) or a person somehow connected with resolving the adventure? What's this person going to do?

And the high-tech camping cot and musician's photo: Is one of them a valued treasure, an item needed for a mission, a clue to solving a mystery, or a hiding place for a very small valuable, like a strip of microfilm or a gemstone? Is the cot a prize to be won, or the photo a part of an estate left to an adventurer by a departed aunt? How will these items drive the adventure?

Let's pick a game and try out some ways to stick these three things together.

. . . In Infinite Combination

Example 1

You're playing GDW's *Dark Conspiracy* game, set on Earth in the near future. We'll make the setting very specific and say the adventurers are in Chicago, here called "Chiwaukee." Horrible monsters and cults are secretly trying to take over the world; the PCs are out to stop them. The heroes are basically troubleshooters, heroes for hire in solving mysteries. You collect your three items and start puzzling out a possible adventure by applying your imagination, incidentally making each item even more specific and detailed as you work, like this:

This college student—maybe he's researching the musician in the photo, or better yet the mathematics of the musician's music. That sounds sort of dry and lame, so maybe there's some other angle to it—like code. Okay, maybe the student is studying cryptography, which has a lot to do with math, and he's investigating an old rumor that this musician imbedded some sort of code in his music. No one's ever figured out any way to break the

code, so all rumors about this musician sticking secret messages into his music are regarded as hoaxes. This student's term paper shows how to apply basic code-breaking techniques to sample "messages," those being three different songs that the musician wrote.

Who was this musician? For some reason, at this point I think of a science fiction book by Walter Tevis, *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. In it, a humanlike alien comes to Earth and manages to have eerie music broadcast over FM radio, at wavelengths that can leave Earth's atmosphere and travel to his homeworld. The eerie music is actually in his native language, which humans would never figure out. (The U.S. Army used the Navajo language in its codes in World War II, and the Germans never did translate it.) Thus, the musician becomes a disguised alien spy who wrote secret messages to his superiors (aboard an Earth-orbiting UFO) by arranging the musical notes in some coded form.

So this college student sees a note about this 1950s "Beat" musician in some obscure music text (we're changing the part about the musician dying 100 years ago, but that's okay), he gets some recordings of the guy's music from old radio station tapes, and he analyzes the music for fun—and he breaks the code by accident. The result confuses him at first, then it scares him to death. The student realizes the musician was a spy, but he doesn't catch on to the musician's alien heritage—he just figures the musician was a Soviet spy, a KGB or NKVD type.

The student turns in his paper before the end of the fall semester, which causes quite a stir in the history department. Word spreads rapidly to the media, and reporters and historians line up to talk with him—only he's disappeared. He went camping with some friends in northern Wisconsin, taking along his thermal cot and the usual assortment of camping and hiking gear. He also took the papers he used to break the code, so he could work on his code-breaking a bit more.

The player characters are hired two weeks later by the boy's family, as he is now a week overdue from his hike (his three friends are missing, too, including his girlfriend). The characters, if they search carefully enough, will find the boy's cot and the rest of the camping gear, scattered in a forest. Some large animal seems to have torn apart the students' camp. One of the math

student's friends is found, too—torn to pieces and frozen.

Investigation of the student's thermal cot reveals a message written onto the cloth with a pen. The terse message says: TWO MEN ATTACKED US—MONSTERS. The code-breaking papers are rolled up and stuffed into one of the cot's hollow legs. Other notes are written on the back of the picture of the musician in the student's room, which no one else has discovered since the picture must be removed from a frame. Only a few other clues remain as to the campers' fate and who their attackers were.

The rest of the adventure's particulars are up to the GM. Is there evidence of a UFO landing? Were the men-monsters actually shape-changing aliens, or human agents with monstrous allies or pets? What's become of the missing campers? Can the investigators use the decoding papers to learn more about the alien conspiracy? And can the adventure be resolved in just an evening or two?

As you see, all this came from three unrelated items in your bedroom, with a little assistance from your imagination. Let's try this technique with a few more combinations of items, and see what we learn from the examples.

Example 2

You are running *West End Games' Star Wars: The RPG*, set on an Imperial-held planet you've developed. The PCs are there as spies and saboteurs for the Rebel Alliance. You stop at a gas station the day before the game and note the following items: 1) a gasoline tanker; 2) a county police car at a gas pump; and, 3) a sign advertising lottery tickets. After some thought, you develop the following adventure:

A huge starship-fuel depot next to the world's major starport has been taken over by the Empire's Stormtroopers. The Rebel underground on the world has decided to pull off an attack against the depot, and the PCs are allowed to "volunteer" for the job to prove their worth to the Rebel commander.

The Rebels have managed to forge some computer cards that would allow some of the PCs to pass as Imperial military policemen. Their mission is to get into the depot and scout it out for the best place to set explosives and blow up as much of the place as possible. Other PCs may disguise themselves as hover-craft drivers who bring in huge

tanks of fuel from refineries in the countryside; the PCs will pretend to be drivers on leave who are coming in to pick up their checks.

Outside the main gates of the fuel depot is a small food shack at which lottery tickets are sold with each meal purchase. What the PCs and the Rebels don't know is that the Imperial forces use the food shack's lottery tickets (which emit a slight radioactive trace) to track suspicious characters. If any PC buys food at the shack and gets a lottery ticket, the Imperials watching the shack from across the street will note that the PC looks unfamiliar, and will authorize various agents to track the PC's movements at a distance, using radiation-detection equipment to pin down the PC's location. Spies will follow the PC back to the Rebel headquarters, but will not go near or inside it.

When the PCs return for their demolition mission, signs will have been posted around the depot and food shack announcing the winning lottery ticket—which happens to be the one the suspicious PC purchased (thanks to the Imperials' rigging of the lottery results). If the PC tries to claim his reward, the Imperials will move in at once to arrest him and everyone with him. PCs disguised as Imperial officers might even be ordered to help in the arrest of their secret ally.

This situation should result in a wild chase or two, with plenty of fireworks and blaster shots. For an alternate plot, try to fit the above three items into FASA's *Shadowrun* campaign or other system set on a futuristic Earth.

Example 3

You are running TSR's *BUGHUNTERS™* game, and you wander into a bookstore two days before your Saturday game. There you notice three particular books: *The Curve of Binding Energy*, by John McPhee (about nuclear theft and terrorism); *Grendel*, by John Gardner (about the monster that Beowulf fought); and *Stick Fighting*, by Masaaki Hatsumi and Quintin Chambers (about a Japanese martial-arts style using a yard-long stick). Because you are using items taken from books, your work is going to be harder, but a far richer plot will result from all the additional associations the books provide. Here's one way you put these together:

The PCs are hired as mercenary guards for a large family estate on Acey-Two, the human colony world

Alpha Centauri AII. The family that owns the estate is largely made up of Japanese and Americans who practice stick fighting for self-defense, eschewing pistols, rifles, and other long-range weapons. With the discovery of alien monsters on Acey-Two, the family has intensified its weapons training and has allowed possession of normal firearms. Now a single monster has begun to raid the estate, a creature impervious to many firearms but one that can be defended against using martial-arts techniques (these do **not** apparently harm it either, merely throwing it off-balance so it **cannot** slay its victims easily).

The PCs are hired to track the monster back to its lair and **there** destroy it. The family at the estate has managed to secretly steal a "suitcase" tactical nuclear weapon, **only** .1 kiloton in yield but more than enough to blast to atoms anything next to it. The PCs' are not told of the device's true nature, only that the bomb is sufficient to deal with the beast. (They are warned not to be in the area when the bomb goes off; the bomb is **remotely** controlled by the family elders, who monitor the PCs' mission by TV and radio pick-up.)

Of course, things are more complicated than that. The monster's lair is in the remains of an ancient Shaper starship that crashed in a bog and was there partially preserved. The ship actually has several of the "Grendels" in and around it, a clan of low-intelligence creations of the Shapers who escaped suspended animation and confinement when a wandering human opened an exposed door on the crashed ship and poked around inside. After eating the human, the Grendels began exploring the area, destroying local wildlife and eventually finding their way to the estate.

The worst problem is that setting off the tac nuke in the starship will trigger a *much* bigger blast, one in the multi-megaton range, that will dump intense fallout across hundreds of thousands of kilometers of land (the estate will be reduced to wasteland in mere days). The PCs must recognize that destroying an alien ship is unwise. Exploring the ship (if the Grendels can be led away from it) allows the discovery of at least one or two means of controlling or destroying the monsters. The PCs can even try communicating with the Grendels, but the monsters' training and genetic makeup make this almost impossible. They were developed

as stupid, vicious guardians, not as independent sentient beings.

Once the adventure is concluded, the PCs may also wish to have a heart-to-heart chat with the estate family if the PCs discovered the weapon they had was a nuke (private ownership of nukes is highly restricted and generally illegal). This adventure goes best if one of the PCs is also a member of the estate family and has martial-arts knowledge that can be used in the adventure.

Toward More Complex Unions

Combining the elements of three detailed stories is the most complex form of the "times three" exercise. As was done in the last example, you just pick out three novels, movies, or TV-show episodes, then combine their elements into an adventure to fit a specific setting in your own science fiction campaign.

This exercise works better if you choose stories that are *not* from science fiction, so that you must add your own science fiction flavor (science fact and historical sources are okay). This will definitely produce more original and creative adventures on your part. For starters, here are some story combinations you can think about. What adventures would you make of these for your game?

Group 1

- *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (a Sherlock Holmes mystery);
- *In the Line of Fire* (a movie about the Secret Service and an assassin after the President); and,
- *The New Madrid Earthquakes*, by James Lal Penick, Jr. (a history of the 1811-1812 Missouri earthquakes).

Group 2

- *Pure Cop*, by Connie Fletcher (nonfiction about American policemen);
- *Bulfinch's Mythology* (classic tales of Greek and Norse gods); and,
- *German Secret Weapons: Blueprint For Mars*, by Brian Ford (nonfiction about Nazi rockets and other devices).

Group 3

- *Robinson Crusoe*, by Daniel Defoe (a shipwrecked survivor's tale);
- *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, by Jorge Luis Borges (a fantasy bestiary); and,

- *Chernobyl*, by Frederik Pohl (nonfiction on the Soviet nuclear disaster).

Group 4 (a though one)

- *Needful Things* (a Stephen King novel about the Devil opening a shop in a New England town);
- *Through the Looking Glass*, by Lewis Carroll (a dream fantasy); and,
- *The Once and Future Star*, by George Michanowsky (nonfiction about a supernova burst seen at the dawn of human civilization).

Notice that, generally speaking, you can still pick two beings and a thing (a nonliving item or event), or one being and two things, from each group of three stories. However, you are also free to select multiple items, either beings and things, from these groups. It all depends on how complicated you want your adventure to get.

If you are unfamiliar with these books and movies, you can pick out groups of your own favorites. You'll quickly see what a challenge it is to select the most prominent and interesting elements of these stories and combine them in a unique manner to fit a science fiction theme in your game. However, the challenge is worth it. You'll produce the most entertaining adventures your players will have ever seen, and your living galaxy will never die.

Creativity takes time and work to develop, but the benefits stay with you always. Give the "times three" technique a try.

Next month, we look at one-on-one science fiction adventures for one player and one Game Master. Enjoy.



Classifieds

California: AD&D® game player looking for an experienced group of players with a strong party leader and DM. Please call Roy Lane at: (961) 243-2336, or write: 2824 Lanning, Redding, CA, 96001.

For Sale: DRAGON® Magazine 10-current, Classic X-Men 9-86, Uncanny X-men 244-303, G.I. Joe 2-139, Groo 32-75, ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS® comic 1-20. Send best offer to David Nadolny, 4342 Knobhill South, Columbus, OH 43228.

For Sale: Good prices! RR1 Darklords, RR2 Book of Crypts, RR3 Van Richten's Guide to Vampires, RR4 Islands of Terror, RR5 VRG to Ghosts, RS1 VRG to the Lich, RA1 Feast of Goblins, RA2 Ship of Horror, RA3 Touch of Death, RQ1 Night of the Walking Dead, RQ2 Thoughts of Darkness, RQ3 Touch of Death, RAVENLOFT® boxed set and Forbidden Lore boxed set. Write to: Laurent Brun, 4040 Rang 13, Kinnear's Mills, Quebec, G0N 1K0, Canada.

General: Experienced GM in Star Wars and the first edition AD&D game seeks PCs to use as NPCs in game. Also willing to GM Star Wars by mail. Contact Doug Weddle, 640 E County Road 300N, Seymour, IN 47274.

General: Hi! I am looking for a gaming club to join or people to start a club with. I play the D&D® and AD&D games. I am willing to learn and play new games. Please contact me, as I'm desperately seeking fellow players. Write to: Jason Thomas, 409 Ridgeway, St. Joseph, MI 49085, or call: (616) 983-4970.

General: Christian gamers, let me hear from you. Send your name, address, and phone number to James C. Alpeter Jr., P.O. Box 143, Syracuse, NY 13206-0143. No false responses, please. And thanks to all who respond!

Maryland: I'm a player who has just started the AD&D 2nd Edition game one year ago. I am 14 years old and am looking for a group that plays the DARK SUN® game setting. If you live in the Baltimore County area, write to: John Schanberger, 50 B Oak Grove Drive, Baltimore, MD 21220.

Israel: All Israeli Network members please contact Yossi Gurvitz at 116 Haazmaut Street, Petah-Tikva, 49379. We are trying to form a Network club.

Michigan: I am a Dearborn based gamer/GM looking for reliable players or games in the Southwest Detroit area. I have

always played the AD&D game and would like to start an AL-QADIM™ game campaign, but I am open to learning any new RPG. I have dabbled in Vampire from White Wolf and like it. My gaming days are Saturday or Sunday nights. I am also interested in DUNGEON® Adventures issues 1-22, DRAGON® Magazine issues 1-170, and volumes 1, 2, 5, and 6 of the GREYHAWK® book series by Rose Estes. Send mail and price lists or call any time. All communications will be answered. Teresa Collins, 23935 West Outer Drive, Apt. B-2, Melvindale, MI 58122-1631, (313) 388-8706.

New Jersey: Naval officer, film producer, and two lawyers, late 20s, looking for one or two gamers to round out AD&D game campaign. Group meets on average once every three weeks, usually Saturdays, in Ramsey, NJ. Call Dave at (804)486-7602.

New York: Rochester group, The Sisters of Destruction, seeks new blood. Apply by sending role playing description for your favorite character in writing, including your address. Send to: Mara, P.O. Box 17006, Rochester, NY 14617-0306.

New York: Attention all members in Onandaga County! I am assembling a members' directory. It is simple: send me a postcard with your name, address, phone number (optional), and your three favorite games/settings. Those who respond will receive a directory containing all the responses I receive by the end of February. Thanks in advance! James C. Alpeter, P.O. Box 143, Syracuse, NY 13206-0143.

Pennsylvania: Ever wondered why Pittsburgh has no convention of its own? So have we. The Dungeoneers Gaming Society is a small gaming organization based in the South Hills of Pittsburgh. We have been networking with fellow Penn Hills gamers, Pittsburgh Dragons, toward this goal, but before we apply for RPGA® Network club membership under one banner and move toward organizing Pittsburgh's first gaming convention, we need your help. Two small gaming clubs aren't enough. If you game in the Pittsburgh area and want to help us or receive more information, please contact: Jennifer Martire at The Dungeoneers Gaming Society, 1755 Potomac Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15216-1948, or call: (412) 343-6226.

Trading cards: I have a large number of 1992 and 1993 AD&D game trading cards I am willing to sell or trade. I am mainly interested in trading the ruby and rare cards from 1993. I also have several full sets of gold-bordered 1993 cards I wish to sell (sold

as complete sets of Part 1, 2, or 3). Write to Greg Himes, 211 Ridgewood Road, Media, PA 19063, or call (215) 565-7303.

Trading cards: For sale: 1992 AD&D trading card factory set, Waldenbooks AL-QADIM game setting unopened, #747-750. 1993 AD&D trading cards 1-165; rare #s 4, 6-8, 10, 15-17, 19, 27, 28, 29, 39-48. Prince Brandon Olafsson, Advance Comics preview sheet. Write to Shaun M. Hardy, Rt. 1 Box 351, Caryville, FL 32427.

POLYHEDRON® Newszine (the official newsletter of TSR Inc.'s ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Network) is published monthly by TSR, Inc. The mailing address for all correspondence is: P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Telephone: (414)248-3625.

POLYHEDRON Newszine is mailed free to all RPGA™ Network members. Membership rates for the U.S., Canada, and Mexico are \$25 per year; foreign rates are \$45 per year (air mail). All prices are subject to change without notice. Changes of address for the delivery of membership materials must be received at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change to ensure uninterrupted delivery.

POLYHEDRON Newszine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork that are accompanied by our Standard Disclosure Form. No responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. No submission will be returned unless it is also accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size.

Unless special arrangements to the contrary are made prior to publication, materials submitted to the publisher for publication in POLYHEDRON Newszine are accepted solely upon the condition that the materials may be edited and published in POLYHEDRON Newszine or used in RPGA® Network sanctioned tournaments, conventions and events without cost to the publisher. TSR and the RPGA Network shall make no other use of the materials unless TSR and the author or artist enter into a written agreement regarding such use.

TSR grants to prospective authors a non-exclusive right to use copyrighted materials of TSR in their submissions to TSR. An author, however, shall have no right to publish or to permit someone other than TSR to publish a submission that includes any copyrighted materials of TSR without first obtaining the written permission of TSR to do so.

All letters addressed to the RPGA Network or to TSR, Inc., will be considered as submissions and may be printed in whole or in part at the discretion of the editor unless the sender specifically requests otherwise in writing.

Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed in POLYHEDRON Newszine are those of the individual authors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of TSR, Inc., the RPGA Network, or its staff.

Standard Disclosure Forms, POLYHEDRON Writing Guidelines, Tournament Request Forms, Membership Forms, Club Forms, and Classified Ad Forms are available from Network HQ.

® designates registered trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.
™ designates trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.

Most other product names are trademarks owned by the companies publishing those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status.

©1993 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

RAVENS BLUFFTM

Player: _____ Network#: _____
Address: _____ Player Level: _____
City: _____ State/ZIP: _____

Warrior: _____ **Titles:** _____

Alignment	Level	Gender	Clan/Race	Class/Kit
-----------	-------	--------	-----------	-----------

ABILITIES

<input type="checkbox"/>	STR	Hit Adj	Dmg Adj	Wt Load	Max Lift	Open Doors	Bend & Lift
<input type="checkbox"/>	DEX	Surprise Adj	Missile Adj	AC Adj		Save Adj	
<input type="checkbox"/>	CON	Hit Pt Adj	System Shock	Resurrect Survival		Hold Breath	
<input type="checkbox"/>	INT	# of Lang.	Highest Spell Lvl	Learn Spell		Max # Spells/Lvl	
<input type="checkbox"/>	WIS	Mental Save Adj	Bonus Priest Spells	1-	2-	3-	4- Spell Failure
<input type="checkbox"/>	CHR	Number of Henchmen	Loyalty Base	Response Adj			
<input type="checkbox"/>	CMS	Response Notes					

MOVEMENT

BASE RATE	
INSIDE	OUTSIDE
JOG [†] = x2	MARCH = x2 MI
RUN [†] = x3 S	FORCED= +.5 MI
RACE [†] = x4 S-4	SWIM [†] = x
SPRINT [†] = x5 S-8	
1 CON CHECK / RD	Encumbrance
HAZARD= x1/3	LIGHT = x2/3
CRAWL= x1/4	MEDIUM= x1/2
CLIMB = x1 FT	HEAVY = x1/3
	MAX = x1 FT

SAVES

MODIFIERS	ADJ.	
		PARALYZE, POISON, DEATH MAGIC
		ROD, STAFF, OR WAND
		PETRIFY OR POLYMORPH
		BREATH WEAPON
		MAGIC SPELLS

Special Saves: _____

SPECIAL ABILITIES

(Racial & Kit Benefits, Hindrances, Detections, Resistance, Vision, et al)

[illegible]

PROFICIENCIES / SKILLS / SPELLS

[illegible]

COMBAT

[illegible]

SPECIAL ATTACKS:

MOUNT/HENCHMAN	LVL/HD	RACE/CLASS	STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHR

AMMUNITION:

[illegible]

ARMOR

MODIFIED AC	ARMOR	AC ADJ	ARMOR	AC ADJ
SURPRISE				
NO SHIELD				
REAR				
SPECIAL DEFENSES:				

HIT POINTS

WOUNDS:	1D10	HIT POINTS / LEVEL

<input type="text"/>	STR INT	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	DEX WIS	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	CON CHR	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	CMS	

Hometown	Nation	Patron / Liege	Religion
----------	--------	----------------	----------

Next Level XP:

NAME	RELATION	AGE	LEVEL/CLASS	HOME	STATUS	ATTITUDE
------	----------	-----	-------------	------	--------	----------

Mannerisms/Habits:

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

COPPER

SILVER

GOLD

ELECTRUM

PLATINUM

OTHER

[illegible]

ITEM	VALUE	ITEM	LOCATION	VALUE	ITEM	LOCATION	VALUE
------	-------	------	----------	-------	------	----------	-------